

APOLOGETICS

or

A Treatise on Christian Evidences

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PREFACE

SOME things are true in all religions. Each system seems to have, in a sense, its historical basis. Each sets up its claim of supernatural origin. But, one by one, as they are subjected to a critical analysis, and the severe test of truth is faithfully applied, their claims, which are fundamental, are found to consist in myth, not in fact.

Christianity, which is founded on the Old and the New Testaments, is an exception to the above statement. The more severe, the broader, and the more scientific the tests which have been applied to Christianity, the more invulnerable has it proved to such attacks.

Recognizing the facts set up in the Holy Scriptures, first, that they are a revelation from God, setting forth both the religious and political history of Israel which, under the guidance of God, was in due time to bring forth a Saviour that would redeem the world from sin and death; second, that in the person of Jesus Christ, the world's Saviour and Redeemer has actually come, and that the statements made in the Old and the New Testaments concerning the development of Israel and the records respecting Jesus Christ are historically true—these are some of the claims set forth in the Christian system—the Christian apologist ought to see that his defense of Christianity must be more than simply negative. As a satisfactory working basis for religious hope and activity he must prove the facts of Christianity beyond a *reasonable doubt*. To do this has been the intent of the author. The historical evidence of Christianity from its origin has

been abundant, but at the present it is overwhelming. The records of the buried past are telling their story, and adding their wealth of testimony to the truth of the written Word. Christianity, like many other systems of truth, is not exempt from objections which are difficult to answer.

In this volume only a preliminary discussion of a number of the fundamental facts are considered, setting forth briefly the status of Christian evidences at the present time.

EZEKIEL B. KEPHART.

Annaville, Pa.

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APOLOGETICS

CHAPTER I.

A REVELATION—ITS NEED AND WHAT IS TO BE PROVED.

A CORRECT treatise on Christian evidences has to do with facts that are vital to the evangelization of the world. On the inherent truths of the Christian system depends its ultimate triumph. To set forth its divine origin, then, as taught in the Old and New Testaments, is the purpose of this treatise. Does the Bible contain a revelation of the divine Mind to man? is a question that thrusts itself upon every investigator of its pages. Are the motives of Moses and the prophets, and of Christ and his apostles, as contained in the Old and New Testaments, really true, and is Christianity supernatural, and are its claims of God? If, then, the history recorded in the Scriptures, and the statements therein contained relative to revealed religion be worthy of belief, these questions must receive an affirmative answer.

**Purpose of
the Book.**

It is not the business of the apologist to step aside from his legitimate task to prove the existence of God and the truths of natural religion. That, together with all that belongs to the subject of theism, falls to the lot of the theologian, and comes more properly under the head of natural theology. These facts, namely, the

**Limitations
of the
Subject.**

existence of God and his manifest government of the universe, are taken for granted in these pages.

**No Valid
Objections
Against
Revelation.**

1. There is no valid objection against a revelation of God to man. Man is a compound of material and spiritual substances. The ego, that is, the personality, the rational soul, is spirit, and lives in a material body. Thought is the act of the spirit, not of the body; and wisdom and knowledge are its possessions, and do not inhere in the body.

**God
Revealed in
Nature.**

God is a spirit, and a revelation from him as such to man is, after all, but the communication of one spirit with another spirit, one person with another. Man, as a rational spirit, is endowed with a capacity for receiving and storing up knowledge. This he does by coming in contact with the thoughts and ideas communicated to him from without. The earth beneath his feet and the heavens which overshadow him, with all their starry host, are constantly yielding up thoughts and ideas to him and enriching his knowledge by their revelations of truth. True, nature does not speak into human ears with human voice, but she communicates to the conscious soul by "marks of design," which are plainly written in every fiber of her warp and woof, and discloses "the eternal power and Godhead" of her supreme Architect.

**The Special
Revelation
Is Personal
—a Father
to His
Children.**

But God's special revelation to man, the Old and New Testaments, is a personal revelation; that is, a revelation from one person to another person. It is nothing more than the great Father communicating useful information to his children; and, too, imparting this information in his children's own language, a language which they well understand. Surely, there is nothing unrea-

sonable in all this, but it is what reason demands from every father who lays claim to have any love for his offspring.

This revelation from God, as Father, to man, as his child, implies a making known of the will of the Father to the child, with a view that the child may understand and obey. In this relation will and obedience imply moral obligation. Moral obligation, in turn, implies specific knowledge of what is required from the one making the requisition to the one at whose hand obedience is required. Nature may speak her ideas in mute forms and in her necessary movements, but *will God*, who is historic and can but speak clear and definite truth? The creation of a world may declare "the power and Godhead" of its creator, but the historic government of that world alone can reveal his attributes of justice, love, mercy, and goodness.

2. A general history would be an inadequate medium of revelation, for while it may refer to the individual, yet it has to do more especially with the race. The acts of divine providence are too general in their application to produce conviction, on the one hand, or the rest of "perfect peace" by faith, on the other. But in a very special sense should a revelation to creatures morally depraved and actually willfully sinful be specifically historic—"a sacred history within the profane history of a fallen world."

**Revelation
is Historic.**

The sacred Scriptures claim to be such a history from God, the Father, to his children, of the redemptive act in man's behalf and the mediation of Jesus Christ, to lift him into conditions of reconciliation with God.

3. A special revelation from God to man implies also the gift of information to man additional to that already had by him, and also man's capacity for receiving such special revelation. To deny the possibility of a special revelation would be to claim that God had given to man all the information he was capable of giving and man, capable of receiving, at the very opening of human history—at his creation. This does not accord with the common sense of mankind. Man knows, on the one hand, that he is capable of receiving additional information, and, on the other, he believes that God is able to give that information. If, for some great and worthy purpose, and to accomplish a noble end, such as the redemption and salvation of a world, additional information was needful to that world, who would be so weak as to acknowledge the need of the added light from heaven, and yet turn and deplore God's lack of ability to give the needed information?

God, the creator of the spirit, understands the constitution of man, and knows how he may be enlightened and influenced; and, having all power, he can, in accord with his own will, adopt means to act upon him. This is no infringement upon God's creature by his Creator. Just "as a man can be influenced intellectually and morally by his fellow-creature without the violation of any law of nature or mind, so he can certainly receive communication from his Creator—the Maker of men and all things—without the destruction of the laws of his own constitution or those of the world."

4. In considering the subject of a special revelation, the fact must not be overlooked that, as such, it must

**Special
Revelation
Possible
and
Necessary.**

**Special
Revelation
in Harmony
with Nature
of God and
Man.**

always be regarded as supplemental to God's first and universal revelation, namely, the light of nature. The facts attesting its divine authority may transcend but not violate the laws of man's nature; they may be supernatural, immediate, and additional to nature, but never out of accord with, or subversive of its constitution.

By a reasonable mind it will scarcely be questioned that God, in giving a special revelation, is capable also of rendering the recipient able to distinguish between what comes from the natural sources of knowledge and what is revealed by special revelation. All who recognize the possibility of a revelation recognize also God's ability to so communicate his truths to man that he is without the possibility not to recognize the voice of God who speaks.

**Special
Revelation
an Addition
to the Light
of Nature.**

The skeptical objection against the supernatural in Christianity has at present but little influence on honest investigators and earnest truth-seekers; and, as the world recedes from the days of David Hume, the influence gradually diminishes. Its syllogistic form is, "That as testimony is more likely to be false than man's general experience, therefore no miracle can be true." Such reasoning would be subversive of all truth, natural as well as supernatural or spiritual. The good sense of mankind will always reject it as proving too much to be true or relied upon. Skepticism has always failed to recognize this fact in respect to the miracles recorded in the Scriptures, namely, that they were both objects of experience and subjects of testimony to the men who then lived where they were performed.

**Hume's
Objection
to Miracles
Answered.**

5. While it may be a question of doubt whether the apologist is under obligation to show the necessity of a

special revelation prior to the consideration of its truths as matters of fact, yet there is scarcely room for reasonable doubt but that such a necessity has, and does now really exist.

(1) The condition of religion among pagan races in the past, as well as in the present age, will always be a forceful argument in favor of man's need of special revealed truth. While nature's light has been alike free to all, its religious teachings have not been sufficient to lift the world out of its sins into conditions of a true civilization; or, at least, it has never succeeded in doing so. Not only has it been the complaint of the serious pagan that the needed light from heaven to direct man aright in matters of religion and of a future life is wanting, but even with the addition of the Christian revelation no right-minded person will complain that the world has too much light on the subject of immortality and all that pertains to human duty. To the serious-minded in all ages and of all lands it has been quite apparent "that it is not in man to direct his steps." When philosophy and learning had well nigh reached their culmination in the ancient world, the wisest and best of that age is represented as expressing his expectation and need of a teacher qualified to reveal the mind of God to the human race. Said the wise Socrates, "It is necessary to wait till such a personage shall appear to teach them how they ought to conduct themselves, both towards God and towards man." He adds: "Oh, when shall that period arrive? And who shall be that teacher? How ardently do I desire to see that man, who he is!"

**Need of
Special
Revelation
as Shown in
Condition
of Pagans.**

(2) With all that Jesus says in the Gospels about a future life and immortality, and what is necessary upon the part of man to gain heaven, who that reads his sacred message does not wish he had given us a little more light on the future world—on heaven and the relation the dead sustain to the living?

**Need of
Special
Revelation,
as Shown
in the
Gospels.**

6. Then, if man needs a special revelation from heaven, and God is able to give the needed light, and man is capable of receiving it, it therefore follows that if God is wise, just, and good such a special revelation has been given. The parent who has the ability to provide for the needs of his offspring, and neglects or refuses to do so, is not wise, just, and good. The same would be true of the great Father of us all. "But as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."

**Some
Objections
Considered.**

If, then, a special revelation is not out of accord with the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God, and we apprehend it is not, because men do not agree as to just what it ought to be, or in what it should consist beforehand, that is, before it is given, will not be regarded as a very formidable objection to it by well-balanced minds, and their faith is not likely to be shaken by such objections. The objection that it is not universal, that is, was not given to all men at the same time, and therefore not of God, is without force. In the first place, the objector fails to note the fact that the special revelation which the Bible professes to contain, claims to have been given originally to all men, but "as man refused to retain God, in his knowledge God gave him up to a reprobate mind." Moreover, the same objection might, with equal force,

be urged by the ignorantly skeptical against the truths of science, because their light does not shine out of the sky with equal clearness to all men at the same time. Who would regard as a valid objection against the efficiency of a medicine the fact that its virtues as such were a recent discovery and not equally known to all, and all equally benefited by it? But the fact that genius is not the gift of all, and the blessings of science are not alike shared by all, is no valid objection against the truths of science or the gift of genius. Nor will objections based upon difference of opinion among men as to what the effect of a special revelation upon mankind would be, or should be, have much weight with the earnest inquirer after truth.

But if the record of what claims to be a special revelation does not contain what it professes, and its effects upon mankind are other than it professes, or the opposite of what it teaches, in whole or in part, then its high claims of a revelation from God may be justly questioned, yea, rejected. But, on the other hand, when its records have been subjected to just criticism, and they are found to contain all they claim, and its effects upon men are in accord with its teachings, and these teachings are wise, just, and good, then its claim as a special revelation, to say the least, becomes highly probable, and must have great weight with right reason.

7. If, then, a special revelation has been given to man, it must be contained either in the so-called sacred books among the religions of paganism or in the Bible, which is the sacred book among Christians. But the student who carefully examines either the Vedas of Bram

or the Koran of Mohammed, or any other of the sacred books of the world's religions, other than the Bible, will be convinced that their claim is without foundation in truth, and in no true sense compares with the grounds of claim upon which the Holy Scriptures rest.

Heathenism is old, and its religions are the products of what it claimed them to be, special revelation; but who, in this closing decade of the best century of all ages, as he surveys the religious condition of the whole of paganism at the present hour, could say, in the light of reason, that from its fruits it is entitled to any claims whatever as a revelation from God? With its human sacrifices and its dark orgies for a period of not less than five thousand years, it presents its victims in a condition the most degraded and forlorn possible, except one, and that would be the victims of no religion at all.

But it is readily admitted that here and there a bright spot lingers on its dark record, yet these may be traced to points in its history where it came in touch, directly or indirectly, with that Word which God spoke out of heaven to Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apostles, as promulgated by his people. From its opening page to the nineteenth century's closing decade its history has been one of sorrow and degradation. Take its statutes, nation by nation, on the subject of morals and the family or home, and, as a rule, they are dark as perdition. By the laws of Lycurgus, chastity was condemned, and infanticide was sanctioned. Solon, the law-giver of Athens, was no better than Lycurgus, for he legalized adultery. The orgies at the temple of Venus at Corinth were as at Venus of Babylon. The Midian

woman who had less than five husbands was looked upon by the law with contempt. Under pagan sanction, pagan mothers performed the religious rite of sacrificing their children to Moloch, whose mouths were seven, which led to seven flaming furnaces within. The Persians buried their children alive, according to Herodotus. To Juno's shrine on the height of Hierapolis came pagan mothers in sorrowing crowds and flung their weeping children forth from the mountain's brow to be dashed to pieces on crags below. Should what history records be an astonishment, that "the feet of pagan women, hastening in despair, wore smooth the rocks up the rugged sides of the promontories of Taygetus and Tænarum, from the summits of which they flung themselves down to death in the depths of the Laconian Sea?" Says Justin, speaking of primitive rites and superstitions, "They immolated men as victims; and children, whose tender years excited the pity even of enemies, they placed upon their altars, purchasing peace of the gods by the blood of those for whose life the gods were accustomed principally to be implored."¹ Diodorus, in speaking of the Carthagenians, consuming their children in honor of Saturn, because they supposed they had offended him by restraining their human sacrifices, says, "Therefore, that they might correct their errors without delay, they immolated in public sacrifice two hundred chosen boys of their principal nobility."² Like customs and religious rites are practiced even at the present time by the pagan races almost around the world. China, India, Hindustan, and Af-

¹ Justin Hist. Lib. 18, chap. 6. ² Did. Sec. Lib. 20.

rica are living examples of the horrors and superstitions of heathenism. It may be said in truth that no well-informed people henceforth will recognize the sacred books of paganism as of divine authority and worthy of man's recognition as such.

Socrates and Plato, as were the sages both of India and China, were bright spots which loomed up on the dark dial of pagan night; but it must not be forgotten that all were younger than Abraham and Moses, and some of them at least, aye, the greatest of them, were born after the death of David, Solomon, and Isaiah. Plato painted his picture of "the good man who was to come," and Socrates expected a legislator who would reveal the will of Deity to the mind of man, but before either of them was born, Isaiah had written his marvelous chapter on the advent and sufferings of our Lord. What access these masters of antiquity had to writings of the Hebrew sages we do not know, but we do know that the queen of the south "came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon," and that Plato acknowledged his acquaintance with Musselman, a Jew, from whom, he states, "he and his company," while on their way to Egypt, "received much more information than they were able to impart to the Jew." It is a fact admitted that the God of the Bible, under Solomon the great king, built his temple at Jerusalem, which served as a mighty Pharos to the pagan world. Then, with our eyes turned to the Bible, we commence to investigate its claims of divine origin.

CHAPTER II.

AUTHENTICITY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

**The Bible a
Wonderful
Book.**

THE Bible, of all books, is the most strange, the most wonderful. The dignity of its composition, its age, and the important nature of the subjects treated in its pages, all, all are wonderful. It comes not to man teaching of God only, nor does it limit its teachings to commands, precepts, doctrines, and ordinances, but it abounds, also, in human history, both of individuals and nations; and no other book so faithfully delineates the silent, secret workings of the human soul. The Bible at once introduces its reader to the infinite, carries him back through the historic period of the human race, and backward still through the rock-written history of the dead ages to the very dawn of creation, and lays open to him the foundations of religion, morality, and truth. It then carries him forward into the mysterious, unknown future, and unfolds to him a sphere of life where matter obtains not, and, by an inscrutable mystery, the bodies of the redeemed are etherealized into spirit—a realm of higher realities, where the things of sense are but fleeting shadows, and God dwells in the presence of his happy children.

**Two
Testaments.**

The Bible is composed of two testaments, the Old and the New, which two constitute the Holy Scriptures, and comprise the entire foundation of religious belief

of both Jew and Christian. The former is esteemed essential by the Jews, but both by the Christians.

The Scriptures, then, become a subject of vital importance when thus considered, not to the believer only, but to the unbeliever also; for if the Bible be an authentic book, too high an estimate cannot be put upon its doctrines and teachings. Are these Scriptures authentic? that is, do "they relate matters of fact as they really happened"? The discussion of this question will constitute the subject matter in these pages.

**Importance
of the
Scriptures.**

AUTHENTICITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

In answering the above question, it is necessary to examine, first, into the reality, the age, and the actions of the leading persons mentioned in the Scriptures, as the instruments used in giving this revelation to the world, and then some of the more important events recorded.

**Method and
Scope of
the Inquiry.**

1. No part of the Scriptures can be traced to the perversions or misapprehensions of the human imagination, nor can its theology be resolved into a mistaken history, a corruption of names, or a puerile allegory. The student who seriously studies the Bible and the religion of its adherents, will find them totally different from the sacred books and religions of the peoples by whom these believers were surrounded. By a succession of revelations a "knowledge of the one true God" was ever kept prominently before them. Every intervention of paganism was set aside by some miraculous power. Although human reason in an uncultivated state is ever wont to tire of the abstract and metaphysical notions of

**Origin of
the
Scriptures.**

the divine attributes, yet by these children of the Most High they were always regarded with veneration. He is represented as infinite, eternal, invisible, unchangeable, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent, a God who corresponds not to any of "the heathen deities." This venerable volume, under the above title, consisting of sixty-six independent books, purports to have been written by many different authors, extending over a period of fifteen hundred to two thousand years. The Old Testament, which is composed of thirty-nine books, claims to contain the first revelation of God to man, and was the foundation of Jewish institutions. The New Testament claims to contain the last revelation, and these Scriptures, conjointly, constitute the foundation of Christian institutions.

In a brief treatise like this, it would be impossible to take up in detail the different authors of the books of the Bible and inquire into all the leading events in biblical history. Hence, we shall select only the more important.

(1) These records state that Moses was the leader and the lawgiver of the Jews, not less than sixteen hundred years before the Christian era, and the author of their religious institutions; that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Saviour of the world; that he lived during the reign of Augustus Cæsar, having been born in the days of Herod, and was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea, in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar. The patient truth-seeker, on investigating this subject, finds ample proof to justify him in believing the above historic facts.

(a) For a period of almost four thousand years those best qualified to judge have harmonized in the opinion that Moses was the legislator of the Jews, the author of their religious institutions, and led them out of Egypt. The Jewish church, from its remotest antiquity, has ascribed the Pentateuch to Moses, and to no other hand. The Christian church, from its foundation, without a dissenting voice, has recognized it as the work of the Jewish lawgiver. The traditional and national history of the Jews rests upon this ground, and is evidenced by the beliefs and teachings of that singular people at the present, as they are scattered among all nations upon the face of the earth. Indeed, this is certain, that "the very same principles of historical evidence which assure us of the truth of any unquestioned fact of profane history assure us of the truth of this." That the Jews existed as a nation very anciently cannot be denied, and that early in their history they were systematically organized into a government, their own writings abundantly testify. That this work of systematic organization, this leading them out of Egypt, and establishing them as a nation, with laws and a religion, must have been the work of some great, commanding spirit, a reasonable mind will not doubt. The Jews, in harmony with their historical records, affirm that Moses was this commanding spirit, who not only led them out of Egypt and for forty years through a desert of sand, but also organized them into a nation and engrafted upon them laws and a religion which have kept them a distinct people for more than forty stormy centuries.

**Moses and
His Work
According
to the
Scriptures.**

**Testimony
of Heathen
Writers
Regarding
Moses.**

(b) But aside from Jewish records and Christian testimony, the most respectable heathen writers witness to the same facts. Josephus, in his first book against Apion, quotes Manetho, of Egypt, as giving an account of the time, the manner, and very many of the principal events that obtained during the sojourn of the Jews in his country. The same author also quotes Cheremon, Apolonius, and Lysimachus as witnessing to the same facts. Justin, a Roman historian, in his abridgement of Trogius Pompeius (Book 36, chapter 2), makes mention of the origin of the Jews from the ten tribes of Israel; speaks of the "beauty of Moses," and declares him to be the "commander of the Jews who went out of Egypt"; of the "institution of the Sabbath" and the priesthood of Aaron.

"The Orphic Verses," supposed to be a thousand years older than our era, teach the worship of one God as commanded by that law, "which was given by him who was drawn out of the water and received two tables of stone from the hand of God." Trogius Pompeius, a Roman, and author of a universal history, who lived in the Augustinian age, says, according to Justin, "But the Egyptians . . . expelled Moses and the diseased from the borders of Egypt."

Diodorus Siculus, in his first book, in speaking of those nations which claimed to have received their laws from God, adds, "Among the Jews was Moses, who called God by the name of Iao." Tacitus declares that "Moses gave a new form of worship to the Jews and a system of religious ceremonies the reverse of everything known to any age or country." The distinguished Greek

historian and geographer, Strabo, born during the century before Christ, and who traveled through Greece, Italy, Egypt, and Asia, that he might obtain a correct knowledge of the geography and facts of history of these countries he visited, "gives an account of the laws of Moses as forbidding images and limiting divine worship to one invisible and universal Being."¹

Josephus, in his criticisms on Apion, or rather Manetho, after quoting Manetho, adds, in substance, "Two things are evident from Manetho's account; first, that the Jews came from another country to Egypt; second, that they left Egypt again, and that, nearly a thousand years before the Trojan war." He again quotes Manetho as saying, "That priest who settled their polity and their laws [the Jews], he was by birth of Heliopolis, and his name was Osarsiph, from Osiris, the god of Heliopolis, but he changed his name and called himself Moses."

Many more ancient authorities might be cited to establish the existence, the age, and the actions of the Jewish lawgiver, but the testimony already adduced makes it clear that Moses was as commonly so regarded among the ancient nations as among the Jews themselves.

2. As to the history of Jesus Christ, the testimony is even more satisfactory and abundant than that in respect to Moses. In the very nature of things, this would be so. The age in which he lived is comparatively modern and peculiarly historic. The age of Greek literature had passed, and Grecian civilization had culminated more than three hundred years before Christ was

**Jesus
Christ.**

¹Geography 1: 16.

born. The Roman empire was in its Augustinian age, with its temple of Janus closed, and at peace with the world. It was an age well fitted for thought and rigid investigation; hence the witnesses are many. The four Gospels contain the history of Christ's advent, his sojourn, teaching, death, and resurrection. They definitely state the age in which these events occurred, and name the then ruling sovereigns of Rome and Judea—Cæsar Augustus and Herod, Tiberius and Pilate, the two former at his birth, the two latter at his death.

(1) To the facts thus recorded in the Gospels, the church which now is, and has ever been from the time of its organization by Christ and his apostles, as history witnesses, bears abundant testimony. The well authenticated writings of Barnabas, Clement, Hermas, Polycarp, and Ignatius have reached our day. These men were contemporary with the apostles, and the three first named are mentioned by name in the New Testament, the fourth was a disciple of St. John, and the fifth discoursed not unfrequently with the apostles of our Lord. Their writings abound in Scripture quotations to a degree that scarcely is there a book in the New Testament not quoted or alluded to by one or the other of these writers. More than two hundred and twenty quotations and allusions to the Scriptures are found in their writings, although but little of their work is now extant.

In the second century, at Carthage, lived Tertullian, a learned man, and a writer vigorous in defense of Christianity. Dr. Lardner says of his writings, "There are more and longer quotations of the small volume of the New Testament in this one Christian author than of

all the work of Cicero in the writers of every character for several ages." Irenæus and Clement of Alexandria were of this century, and writers in the defense of Christianity. Irenæus quotes from Ephesians 5:30, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Clement writes, "The blessed Paul in the first epistles to the Corinthians says, 'Be not children in understanding.'" Justin Martyr flourished in this century. He was of heathen parents, and studied in the different schools of the philosophers in his day, but became a convert to Christianity. He also wrote many works in the defense of Christianity. He gives his testimony to "the genuine and authentic accounts of Jesus Christ and his doctrine," as contained in the four Gospels. He also affirms that the Book of Revelation was written by John, "one of the apostles of Christ." In the third century lived and flourished Origen, about the year 230. He is represented by Jerome as the most distinguished doctor of the church since the apostles, had the Scriptures by heart, and his labors were most abundant in studying and explaining them. His writings against Celsus, an Epicurean philosopher, and an enemy to Christianity, are well known to the church. Dionysius of Alexandria, Victorinus, a bishop of Germany, and Cyprian, a bishop of Carthage, all wrote able defenses of the Christian religion, in which they have quoted passages from almost every book in the New Testament. So copious are the quotations of the writers of the second and third centuries, that if the New Testament were lost, a copy of it, complete, might almost be collected from their writings.

**Testimony
of Heathen
Writers
Regarding
Christ.**

(2) But the enemies of Christ, as well as his friends, give testimony to these historic facts. Tacitus, in his "Annals" (15-44), says: "Nero put those who commonly went by the name of Christians to the most exquisite tortures. The author of this name was Christ, who was capitally punished in the reign of Tiberius, by Pontius Pilate, the procurator."

Suetonius, secretary to Trojan, and the author of the "Lives of the Twelve Cæsars," states that "in the time of Claudius, the Jews were making a disturbance at Rome, Christ being their leader." Cerinthus, a Jew and a noted heretic of the first century, is cited by Irenæus as teaching that "Jesus was not born of a virgin, but of Joseph and Mary, and at the time of his baptism the Christ descended from 'that principality which is over all' in the form of a dove."

Porphyry, an early opponent of the Christian faith, and author of fifteen books against Christianity, witnesses for Christ by stating that "after Jesus was worshipped, Esculapius and the other gods did no more converse with men." He was well acquainted with the church in his day, and in his writings makes frequent reference not only to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John, but also to the Acts of the Apostles and the epistle to the Galatians.¹

Julian, who succeeded Constantius to the empire in 361, wrote a work against Christians, in which there is valuable testimony to the history of Christianity, and the authenticity of the New Testament. He states that Jesus was born in the reign of Augustus Cæsar, at the

¹Lardner, Vol. IV., page 234.

time Cyrenius levied a tax on Judea, and assigns the time of the beginning and propagation of Christianity to the reign of Tiberius and Claudius. He quotes Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and the Acts of the Apostles as the historical books received by the Christians as of authority, and "the only authentic memoirs of Jesus Christ and his apostles and the doctrine preached by them." While Julian acknowledges that Christ and his disciples performed many wonderful works, such as restoring sight to the blind, healing the lame, casting out demons, walking upon the sea, and stilling the waves; and that multitudes of all classes in Greece and Italy, even before John wrote his Gospel, flocked to the standard of the cross, he, nevertheless, strives zealously to diminish not only the number of the converts, but their quality, also. The spirit manifested by him throughout his entire treatise against Christianity is one of spite and bitter hatred. Most indignantly he mentions Peter and Paul, and in the same spirit he vainly sought to give the lie to the Galilean by attempting to restore the Jews to Jerusalem. Pliny, the younger, distinguished as an orator, historian, and statesman, born at Como, in A. D. 61 or 62, says that "Christ was worshiped as a god among the Christians; that they would rather suffer death than blaspheme him; that they received a sacrament, and by it entered into a vow of abstaining from sin and wickedness, conforming to the advice of Paul; that they had private assemblies of worship, and used to sing together in hymns."¹

¹Pliny Epist. lib. 10.

Celsus flourished in the year 176. He was a man of letters, and is regarded as an eminent philosopher among modern skeptics. His arguments against the Christians were labored and able. His testimony cannot be rejected as deficient in antiquity, nor can any one accuse him of a want of zeal to overthrow Christianity. A man of his genius, industry, and learning must have known if there were anything spurious in the authorship of the New Testament writings.

Origen, in his answer to the arguments of this learned opponent of Christianity, enumerates about eighty passages from the New Testament, or references to them, quoted by Celsus. These quotations evidence that he was acquainted with the Gospels of Luke, Matthew, and John, and also several of the epistles of Paul. He concedes throughout his argument that the Christian Scriptures were the work of their purported authors, and not a scintillation of suspicion to the contrary is anywhere apparent. In the language of Dr. Doddridge, "Who can forbear adoring the depths of divine wisdom in laying up such a firm foundation of our faith in the gospel history, in the writings of one who was so inveterate an enemy to it, and so indefatigable in his attempts to overthrow it?"

One more noted opponent to Christianity we mention in this connection. It is Hierocles, the man who set up the reputed miracles of Apollonius Tyranæus to offset the miracles of Christ, which he did not deny. He was a learned man, and wrote two books against Christianity. He refers to the Gospels and the two epistles and mentions Peter and Paul by name. The testimony

of this author clearly establishes three facts: first, that the Scriptures were then in existence; second, that Christianity as an institution then existed; and third, that Christ was its author.

Dr. Lardner says of these authors, "They bear a fuller and more valuable testimony to the books of the New Testament, and to the facts of evangelical history, and to the affairs of Christianity than all our other witnesses besides." Dr. Paley adds, in effect, "These witnesses prove that neither Celsus in the second, Porphyry in the third, nor Julian in the fourth century suspected the authenticity of these books, or even insinuated that Christians were mistaken in the authors to whom they ascribed them." And it may be added, can any reasonable mind demand more and stronger proof to the truth of the facts claimed by the Scriptures than that in Cerinthus, Celsus, Porphyry, Hierocles, and Julian, all of whom were learned controversialists as well as devout opponents and persecutors of Christians, except Cerinthus, their testimony extending from the first century to the year 361 of our Lord?

3. Now by examining the catalogues of Josephus and Philo, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Septuagint version, we have ample proof that the books of the Old Testament, which we regard as sacred, were so regarded by the Jews long before, and at the time of the advent.

(1) Philo, the Jew, according to C. Segford, must have had the same books that we have, for he quotes from almost all of them. But the most satisfactory witness on this point is Josephus. In his criticisms on Apion (1. 8), he says: "For we have not an innumer-

**Old
Testament
Regarded
Sacred
Before
Christ.**

**Witness of
Josephus.**

able multitude of books among us, . . . but only twenty-two books, which contain the record of all the past times, which are justly divine. And of them five belong to Moses, which contain his laws and the tradition of the origin of mankind till his death. . . . The prophets who were after Moses wrote down what was done in their time in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God and precepts for the conduct of business life." Now, when we take into account that Josephus follows the custom of the Alexandrian Jews in enumerating his catalogue, we find that his custom is identical with ours; that is, he adds Ruth to Judges and Lamentations to Jeremiah.

**Samaritan
Pentateuch.**

(2) The Samaritan Pentateuch is so nearly identical with the Jewish that it is evident the former is a copy of the latter. The Jews and Samaritans have been at enmity from antiquity; both are the descendants of Abraham, and alike claim Moses as their lawgiver and author of the Pentateuch. They have ever watched each other with a jealous eye, and both alike have watched the Christian church; but the Pentateuch with the Christian, the Jew, and the Samaritan is the same. Hence, the forceful evidence that no change has been made in this sacred document, at least, since the time the Samaritans received their copy, either from the ten tribes, whom they succeeded, as an inheritance, or from the priest who came and "dwelt at Bethel and taught them how they should fear the Lord."

**Septuagint
Version a
Witness.**

(3) The Septuagint version is an important factor in establishing the authenticity of the Old Testament, for it is the most important and the oldest complete trans-

lation of the Scriptures in any language. This Greek version, especially the five books of Moses, dates not later than two hundred and eighty years before Christ. The other books of the Hebrew canon followed in translation, and the entire version was completed not later than the middle of the second century B. C. This version, containing the sacred canon of the Jews, as acknowledged and used, at least by the Alexandrian Jews, evidences the fact that, for a period of one hundred and fifty years prior to the Advent, the Jewish Scriptures were complete as we have them now.

That Ezra, after the exile, collected the sacred books of the Hebrews as now recognized by Jews and Christians, except the books of Malachi and Ezra, is a fact that has scarcely been questioned; and shortly after the Maccabean persecution the Old Testament appears as a whole.

Also, as Dr. Philip Schaff says in his "Companion to the Greek Testament," page 23, "It is a remarkable fact, not yet sufficiently explained, that the great majority of the citations of the Old Testament in the New, which amount to about 280, are taken from the Septuagint, or at all events agree better with it than with the Hebrew original."

The Christian church has always received the Old Testament as authentic, and the first revelation of God to man. To this effect it received the endorsement of Christ and his apostles. More than two hundred quotations from the Old Testament are made by the writers of the New, which surely they would not have made had they suspected anything spurious or unauthentic in these Scriptures.

**Canon of
the New
Testament.**

4. As to the New Testament: The books which now compose it are the same as those placed in the sacred canon by the church fathers. Besides the many, many quotations by the apostolic fathers and their immediate successors, not less than eleven distinct, formal catalogues, comprising the present books of the New Testament, were formed, and two of them by the highest councils of the church. These catalogues are now extant. The Assyrian Bible contains the four Gospels, the Acts, fourteen Pauline epistles, the epistles of James, I. Peter, and I. John. This collection is surely not later than the beginning of the third century, and was, at that time, the canon of that part of the church.

“The Muratorian Fragment,” which dates not later than the last quarter of the second century, includes “the four Gospels, Acts, thirteen epistles of Paul, I. John, II. John, Jude, Revelation of St. John, and that of Peter.”¹

It is evident from the preceding statements that at the close of the second century our present New Testament canon was complete, and had been, in a fragmentary form, unanimously endorsed by the church, notwithstanding the canonical authority of some of the books had not as yet been settled, and no canon adopted in a universal sense.

About the year 315, Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea, formed a catalogue of the New Testament Scriptures, in which he mentioned all of our present books.²

¹ Schaff-Herzog Cyclopedia, E. R. K., Page 390.

² Lardner, Vol. II., page 368.

The council of Laodicea published a catalogue in the year 360, differing from ours in nothing except in the omission of the book of Revelation.¹

Athanasius and Cyril, early in the fourth century, published catalogues which agree with our own, save in the omission of the Book of Revelation in the catalogue furnished by Cyril.

The council at Carthage, which met in the year 397, composed of forty-four bishops, of which Augustine, bishop of Hippo, was a member, declared, "It is ordained that nothing beside the canonical Scriptures be read in the church under the name of divine Scriptures; and the canonical Scriptures are these," etc. The list given is identical with our New Testament books.²

Rufinus, of Aquileia, in "Explication of the Apostles' Creed," says, "It will not be improper to enumerate here the books of the Old and New Testaments, which we find by the monuments of the Fathers to have been delivered to the churches as inspired by the Holy Spirit." This list of books is identical with ours.³

To these might be added the catalogue of Epiphanius, of Gregory Nazianzen, and of Jerome, with many others, but a sufficient number have been introduced to establish the fact that "by the year 397 the canon of the New Testament was established," and has thus descended to us in a way that we have the assurance that our Scriptures are those placed in the sacred canon by the church fathers.

¹ Lardner, page 414.

² Lardner's "Credential Gospel History," Vol. II., page 574.

³ Lardner, Vol. II., page 574.

5. It is well known that Polycarp was a disciple of St. John, and heard the apostle, and was the instructor of Irenæus. Irenæus attributes the four Gospels to the apostles, whom Polycarp knew. His words are: "John relates his original, effectual, and glorious generation from the Father, thus declaring, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' Luke takes up his priestly character. . . . Matthew again relates his generation as a man, saying, 'The Book of the generation of Jesus the son of David, the son of Abraham.' Mark, on the other hand, commences with the prophetic spirit from on high, saying, 'The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in Esaias, the prophet.'"

But, in addition to the evidence already adduced, the discoveries made within the last quarter of the century just closed, are remarkably accumulative, especially as they relate to the authenticity of the fourth Gospel, about which there has been some question among critics. The documents which are of special interest are four, namely:

1. *The Apology of Aristides.* This was presented to the Emperor Hadrian at Athens in the year 125. The following is an extract from it: "The Christians reckon the beginning of their religion from Jesus Christ, who is named the Son of God Most High; and it is said that God came down from heaven, and from a Hebrew virgin took and clad himself with flesh, and in a daughter of man there dwelt the Son of God. This is taught from that gospel which a little while ago was spoken among them as being preached; wherein if ye also will read, ye

**Docu-
mentary Evi-
dence.**

**Apology of
Aristides.**

will comprehend the power that is upon it. This Jesus, then, was born of the tribe of the Hebrews, and he had twelve disciples, in order that a certain dispensation of his might be fulfilled. He was pierced by the Jews, and he died and was buried; and they say that after three days he rose and ascended to heaven; and then these twelve disciples went forth into the known parts of the world and taught concerning his greatness with all humility and sobriety. And on this account those also who to-day believe in this preaching are called Christians, who are well known."¹ This apology, in a brief, terse form, sets forth the teachings of the New Testament Scriptures as we have them now and were held then.

(2) *The Diatessaron of Tatian.* This is a most valuable document, as it was intended to be a harmony of the four Gospels. The book was long lost. It was referred to by Eusebius as a "collection of the Gospels, called the Diatessaron." Theodoret says, "Tatian also composed a gospel called the Diatessaron."² The same author says, "I myself found more than two hundred such books (the Diatessaron) held in respect in the churches of our parts."³ The Diatessaron belongs to the early part of the second century, and puts the authenticity of the four Gospels to rest in the minds of all reasonable men.

**Diatessaron
of Tatian.**

This Tatian was a pupil and a disciple of Justin Martyr, who speaks of, and quotes from the "Memoirs of the Apostles," from which, there is not ground for a

¹ Contemporary Review, Vol. LX., page 109. The Apology of Aristides, by George F. Stokes.

² E. H. 4; 29. ³ Fabulæ Hæreticæ 1: 20.

reasonable doubt, his pupil composed his "Harmony of the Gospels." The Diatessaron now discovered verifies the correctness of these quotations claimed to have been taken from it by so many different authors, and confirms the description also given of it by later commentators. By a critical comparison of this document with the four Gospels, it becomes at once manifest that Tatian's Gospels which he had in hand must have been essentially the same as the four we have at the present time.

(3) *The newly-discovered Syriac Version of the Scriptures.* This version was discovered in 1892 in the Convent of St. Catharine on Mt. Sinai, by Mrs. Lewis and her sister, Mrs. Gibson, and contains the textual variations found in the Curetonian Syriac version, which was brought, among other manuscripts, from the monasteries in the Nitrian Desert, in Lower Egypt, in 1833.

**Syriac
Version.**

It is conceded that the Curetonian version is a translation older than the Peshito version, which was in general use in the Syrian church in the second and third centuries. The textual variations in the Curetonian correspond, as a rule, to those found in the Diatessaron of Tatian, which, as already stated, was prepared early in the second century. But while this translation accords with the texts of the best and the oldest manuscripts, yet it is most manifest that in some respects it was intentionally corrupted to cater to certain heresies. Says Dr. G. F. Wright¹: "The most conspicuous instance of this relates to the miraculous conception of Christ which we know to have been denied by Cerinthus at the close of the first century. According to Irenæus,² Cerinthus

¹ Scientific Aspects of Christian Evidences, page 230.

² Irenæus, Against Heresies, bk 1, chap. 26.

represented 'Jesus as having not been born of a virgin, but as being the son of Joseph and Mary according to the ordinary course of human generation, while he nevertheless was more righteous, prudent, and wise than other men. Moreover, after his baptism Christ descended upon him in the form of a dove from the Supreme Ruler, and that then he proclaimed the unknown Father, and performed miracles.' With these views of Cerinthus concerning the person of Christ the sect called Ebionites are said to have agreed."

(4) *The Gospel of Peter*. This was discovered in a package taken from a Christian tomb in Akhmim, in Upper Egypt, and published in 1892. It is of much importance. This is only a fragment, containing in all about sixteen hundred words. All the modern world knew of it was what the church fathers said about it; but now it comes in as an evidence of the authenticity of the Scriptures,—not that it is to be received as a complete Gospel written by Peter, but only a fragment or a compilation from the four Gospels and bearing his name; and as an evidence that at the time it was prepared the four Gospels were in existence and received by the church. It is a fact, says Norton, "that no apocryphal gospels, real or supposed, are mentioned by any writer before the time of Origen, besides Irenæus and Clement, except Serapion quoted by Eusebius." About the close of the second century, Serapion was bishop of Antioch, and wrote a tract concerning the "Gospel of Peter which Eusebius gives in his "Ecclesiastical History," Book IV., chapter 12. "Another tract was composed by Serapion concerning the Gospel according to

**Gospel of
Peter.**

Peter, so called, the object of which was to confute the errors contained in it, on account of some in the church at Rhossus who had been led by this book to adopt heterodox opinions. From this it may be worth while to quote a few words in which he expresses his opinion concerning it. 'We, brethren,' he writes, 'acknowledge the authority both of Peter and the other apostles, as we do that of Christ; but we reject, with good reason, the writings which falsely bear their names, well knowing that such have not been handed down to us. I, indeed, when I was with you, supposed that you were all going on in a right faith; and, not reading through the Gospel under the name of Peter which was produced by them (those who were pleased with it), I said, If this is all that troubles you, let the book be read. But having since learnt from what has been told me that their minds had fallen into some heresy, I hasten to be with you again, brethren, so that you may expect me shortly. Now we, brethren, know that a like heresy was held by Marcion, who also contradicted himself, not comprehending what he said, as you may learn from what has been written to you.¹ For we have been able to procure this gospel from others who use it, that is, from his followers, who are called Docetæ (for the greater part of the opinions in question belong to their system), and, having gone through it, we have found it for the most part con-

¹ As this sentence is unimportant, and as I believe the present text to be corrupt, I have ventured to render it as perhaps it should be amended. It now stands thus: 'Ἡμεῖς δὲ, ἀδελφοί, καταλαβόμενοι ὅποιος ἦν αἰρεσῆς ὁ Μαρκιανός, καὶ ἐαυτῷ ἠγαντιούτο, μὴ νοῶν ἃ ἐλάλει, ἃ μαθήσεσθε ἐξ ὧν ὑμῖν ἐγράφη. Ἐδυνήθημεν γὰρ παρ ἄλλων, κ. τ. λ. I would read the first words as follows: 'Ἡμεῖς δὲ, ἀδελφοί, καταλάβομεν ὅτι ὁμοίως ἦν αἰρέσεως ὁ Μαρκίων ὅς καὶ ἐαυτῷ ἠγαντιούτο, κ. τ. λ. There is also some uncertainty about the precise meaning of the next sentence; fortunately this uncertainty does not extend to anything important in the paragraph.

formable to the true doctrine of the Saviour; but there are some things exceptionable, which we subjoin for your information.' ”

This fragment of the original document amply verifies the correctness of Serapion's statements. It is a compilation, but by whom we know not, with a coloring and interpolation made, no doubt, in the interest of certain heresies and especially the Docetic. But the real point here is, the author of "Peter's Gospel" used John's Gospel in his compilation, as well as Matthew's, Mark's, and Luke's, thus showing not only that the fourth Gospel was in existence, but that it was recognized by the churches. From the fact that Justin Martyr was well acquainted with this reported Gospel of Peter, it is manifest that it must belong to the first half of the second century.

How brief, then, the period between the death of our Lord and the death of his apostles, to the time when the four Gospels were put in the form we now have them, and became the recognized authority of the church.

(1) Another ancient record must here be taken into account. This is the Tel-el-Amarna Tablets, discovered in 1887. They are written in cuneiform characters, and number more than two hundred tablets. They belong to the fifteenth century B. C., and consist of a series of letters between Egyptian and Asiatic kings.

Tel-el-
Amarna
Tablets.

At this time Israel was yet in Egypt, and these letters throw much light on the political condition and civilization both of Palestine and Egypt at that period. It is a little strange that they were written, too, in the Babylonian language. They come from Byblos, Tyre, Gezer,

and Ashkelon, localities well known to biblical history; and from such persons as Azirn, Shubandi, from the king of Mitonni to Amenophis III., from Alishaya, in Upper Mesopotamia to Amenophis III., and from Burrayash to King Amenophis IV. The representations given in these records are in strict accord with what the Bible states was the real condition of society in those countries at that time. The political, social, and commercial activity in western Asia, and the extended international communications which obtained, according to these ancient records, revolutionize previous modern thought respecting those primitive days.

(2) Israel at an early period came in contact with a great people, the Hittites, whose history is shadowed in deep mystery. It was from Ephron, the Hittite, that Abraham "purchased the field and the cave" in which he "buried Sarah his wife." In Joshua, we read of "the land of the Hittites," but outside of the Bible the world really knew nothing about this great people until in the last half of the nineteenth century. And even from the Bible all that could be learned of them was, that such a people existed in Palestine in the days of Abraham, and that they were yet in the country when Israel came out of Egypt. But nothing of value could be gathered respecting their history, either from Egyptian, Armenian, or Assyrian records. As a result, by not a few critics, all that was said of them in the Pentateuch was swept away as mythical and legendary. But by recent discoveries the Hittite empire is brought to light, and all that is stated and implied in the sacred Scriptures respecting them is more than verified. In the records

**Hittite
Testimony.**

of the ~~twenty eighth~~ ^{eighteenth} dynasty of Egypt is found the first mention of the Hittites outside of the Pentateuch. Thothmes III. is said "to have received tribute from 'the land of the Hittites.'" "The Tel-el-Amarna records, dating from the time of Amenophis III. and IV., of the same dynasty, contain more than thirty references to these peoples."¹ With these Hittites, Rameses II. made his famous treaty in the twenty-first year of his reign, which reads, "He shall be my ally; he shall be my friend; I will be his ally; I will be his friend; forever."

The Hittites are known to have been a literary people, but their language was remarkably different from the languages of the nations by which they were surrounded and with whom they held intercourse. The Tel-el-Amarna tablets locate these people originally in the Taurus Mountains, and perhaps in Cappadocia. Their inscriptions and sculptures thus far discovered, show that their power and influence extended as far west as Lydia, in Asia Minor, and southward to Hamath, and that they were a distinct people from eight hundred to a thousand years. Their inscriptions are peculiar and varied, and at present we know not how to translate them, but some day the Hittite records will tell their story to the modern world as now do the hieroglyphics of Egypt.

From all that has been gathered from the monuments thus far, it is quite evident that the Hyksos ruled Egypt when Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph entered that country, and that their dominion there was brought to a close by

¹The Monuments and the old Testament, chap. 22, page 263.

Thothmes III. and his successors. The author of "The Monuments and the Old Testament" says¹: "In surveying the whole sweep of discoveries in the historical line, one may well be amazed at the galaxy of characters now drawn up to view. Beginning back at the fourteenth chapter of Genesis, we find evidences of the existence of the leader, Chedorlaomer, of the great Elamite campaign against the cities of the plain. The probabilities of a Hyksos domination in Egypt when Abraham and Joseph reached the Nile land are increasing with each new Egyptian discovery touching this period. The possession at Gizeh Museum of the mummy of the Pharaoh of the oppression, Rameses II., and a tablet of the time of Mineptah II., bearing the name, 'Israel,' add great vividness to the bondage of Israel in Egypt. Portraits of some of the Canaanitish people show us the kind of soldiers that disputed with Joshua the occupation of the Promised Land. Shishak's portrait of his captives from Canaan bears evidence on the face of it of the verity of the Kings' record of that event. The Moabite stone tells us that Mesha, of Moab (II. Kings 3:4), was no less a king than represented by the compiler of Kings. The record of Shalmaneser II. bears testimony to the existence of Ahab, of Ben-hadad, and Hazael, of Damascus, and of 'Jehu son of Omri.' Tiglath-Pileser III. has left most valuable documents, in which he mentions Azariah (Uzziah) and Ahaz, of Judah, and Menahem, Pekah, and Hoshea, of Israel, and Rezin, of Damascus. Sargon II. describes his capture of Samaria, and of Ashdod. Sennacherib's records are full of facts regarding his il-

¹ Page 293.

lustrious campaign of 701 B. C., where we find Hezekiah mentioned by name, the siege of Lachish pictured on his walls, and the amount of tribute paid the invader. Esarhaddon and Asurbanipal both mention in their list of tributaries Manasseh, of Judah. The overthrow of Nineveh, pictured in Nahum, is attested by a small inscription of Nabonidus. The policy of Nebuchadnezzar, and his administrative ability, are evident in his own records. The annals of Nabonidus and of Cyrus picture the fall of Babylon and the governmental policy of Cyrus outlined in the Old Testament. Belshazzar is seen to be the son and coregent of Nabonidus, the last Semitic king of Babylon. The construction of the palace of Susa is found to correspond in every important respect with the descriptions of the Book of Esther. In brief, we now have several new and corroborative chapters of history as one immediate result of the decipherment of the new documents dug out of the earth within the last half century."

It matters but little whether we look to the land of the Pharaohs, to the wilderness of wanderings, to the plains of Moab, to the ancient city of the great king, to the archives of Nineveh, or to the record of Babylon, the same unequivocal testimony comes from all, to the authenticity of the sacred record.

And now having somewhat discussed the authenticity of the Scriptures, we close with the words of Bishop Butler: "These observations are, I think, just, and the evidence referred to in them real, though there may be people who will not accept of such imperfect information from Scripture. Some, too, have not integrity and

regard enough for the truth to attend to evidence, which keeps the mind in doubt, perhaps perplexity, and which is much of a different sort from what they expected. And it plainly requires a degree of modesty and fairness beyond what every one has for a man to say, not to the world, but to himself, that there is a real appearance of somewhat of great weight in this matter, though he is not able to thoroughly satisfy himself about it; but it shall have its influence upon him, in proportion to its appearing reality and weight. It is much easier, and more readily falls in with the negligence, presumption, and willfulness of the generality, to determine at once, with a decisive air, that there is nothing in it. The prejudices arising from that absolute contempt and scorn with which their evidence is treated in the world, I do not mention. For what, indeed, can be said to persons who are weak enough in their understandings to think this any presumption against it; or, if they do not, are yet weak enough in their temper to be influenced by such prejudices upon such a subject?"

CHAPTER III.

INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

1. HAVING discussed the authenticity of the Scriptures somewhat, we now proceed to consider the inspiration of their authors. The relation existing between these two topics is such that much that has been said on the former is equally applicable to the latter, for the one subject involves the other. The history of the revelation of God's will to man shows that the manner of its delivery was not as human reason would have concluded it would be.

**Relation of
Inspiration
to Authen-
ticity.**

(1) Reason would have said, it will be given immediately, not mediately; not universally, but to individuals; not partially, but completely; decidedly, not demonstrably; at once, not progressively. Seldom did God reveal himself in a like manner to different persons, and scarcely ever twice in the same way to the same person. In Eden, his voice was heard in the cool of the day (Gen. 3:8); to Noah he spake by intuition, or inward utterance; to Abraham by angels, visions, and by a burning lamp; to Moses by an angel in the burning bush and by lightning and thunder; to Jacob by a dream—a ladder was let down from the skies—and by a wrestle with the angel of God; to his chosen people by dreams and by his prophets. (I. Sam. 28:6.) Then came a cessation of a period of four hundred years, from Malachi

**Manner in
which God
Spake to
Man.**

to the Advent, when God, in the person of his Son, appeared among men to reveal his will complete, and to open forever the gates of eternal day by the descent of the Holy Spirit.

Such has been somewhat of the order in which God made his revelations, and the sixty-six books already mentioned contained record of these revelations. But it is not the purpose in this treatise to give a history of the doctrine of inspiration as it developed in the church, but the student is referred to Schaff and Herzog¹ for that information. While the Holy Scriptures themselves lay claim to inspiration, they contain no specific definition of that term, and hence the many theories entertained by believers. Not less than five well-defined theories, often modified in a degree, have found adherents in almost every age of the church, which theories may be stated as follows:

**Five
Theories of
Inspiration.**

**Dictation or
Mechanical
Theory.**

(a) The dictation or mechanical theory, which obtained in the early ages of the church, holds that every idea, sentence, word, letter, and even vowel point of the Scriptures had been dictated by the Holy Ghost. At the time of the Reformation, the human element in the inspired writings seems to have been more fully recognized, but later, in the Protestant churches, it has been formulated into "an accurate theological dogma."

**Dynamical
Theory**

(b) The dynamical theory is the second, and seems to have displaced in a degree the first theory. This holds that the sacred Scriptures were committed to writing under the guidance of, but not dictated by, the Holy Spirit. The writers were free to use their own language

¹S. & H., Vol. II., page 1101.

and adopt their own style. The truths were revealed, but the language was peculiar to the individuality of the writers.

(c) The third theory is that of divine illumination. It dates from the days of the Jewish rabbis, who distinguished between the prophetic spirit, which inspired the law and the prophets, and the Holy Spirit, which enabled man to speak and write such words and sentences of holiness as do not transcend the faculties of men. Its advocates hold to the view of different degrees of inspiration just in proportion as the light of the divine Spirit quickened and illuminated the understanding of the sacred writers from the highest degree of splendor to the faintest glimmer of light.

**Illumina-
tion Theory**

(d) There is also a fourth theory, which has many able advocates, such as Archdeacon Paley, Dr. Doddridge, Van Oosterzee, Baxter, Erasmus, Leclerc, F. W. Farrar, and Dr. Dorner; also, Alford, Calvin, and Lange. It is usually called the essential theory, as distinguished from the plenary. Its formula is, "The Bible contains the word of God," but rejects as faulty that other formula, "The Bible is the word of God." The advocates of this theory of inspiration, says Canon Farrar, "confine this inspiration to matters of doctrine, matters of morality, and, above all, to matters of faith."

**Essential
Theory.**

(e) The advocates of the four theories hold to this one theory in common, namely, that the Holy Scriptures are divinely inspired and infallible in matters of doctrine, morality, and faith. They also differ from a fifth theory, called "Ordinary Inspiration," in that they believe it to be "an extraordinary, transcendent operation

**Ordinary
Inspiration.**

of the Holy Spirit," while the advocates of the ordinary theory hold that in the action of the Holy Spirit, as exercised in the inspiration of the Scriptures, there is no generic distinction from the ordinary operations of that Spirit upon the heart and intellect of true believers in all ages.

Other points of difference among the above theories might be named, as well as their merits pointed out, but brevity forbids it in this connection. It will be safe, however, to say that while no one of them contains all of the truth on the subject of the inspiration of the Scriptures, no one of them is wholly destitute of some truth on the subject. As Dr. Sprecher has well said, "The true conception seems to be that the apostles had the same kind and the same degree of assistance in their written as in their oral instructions, and that they were as much required to use their natural powers and to avail themselves of natural means of information in the former as in the latter; and that they did, on the other hand, as certainly in the former as in the latter, receive aid of any and every kind which might be necessary to give infallibility to their written as well as to their oral instructions."

2. Divine inspiration, then, may be defined: *The Holy Spirit so moving, influencing, controlling, and using the sacred writers as to make them his mediums through which to give a written revelation of his will to man of the plan of salvation, the ideas communicated being inspired, true in point of fact, but the writers being left free to clothe those ideas in their own language, but so restricted by the Holy Spirit in the use of lan-*

**Comparison
of the
Theories.**

**Inspiration
Defined.**

guage as not to use words that would misrepresent those ideas.

The sacred writers did not "speak as they were dictated to, but they 'spake as they were *moved by the Holy Spirit.*'" All that can be desired in the sacred narrative is certainty, and this we surely have in the Scriptures. The Bible is emphatically God's book, divine and infallible as a rule of morals, doctrines, and faith. It is addressed to human beings, human beings were employed as the organs of its communication, and human language as the vehicle of its inspired thoughts; hence, His book must possess the variety of style and the mode of expression peculiar to the writers whom he inspired to write it, and the age in which they wrote. One thing must be kept ever before the mind, that while the "divine element in the inspired books does not destroy or shut out the human," nevertheless, inspiration is a miracle, and in the language of an eminent divine, "the special miraculous, divine influence in the Bible cannot consistently be denied by any who acknowledge the indestructibility of the Bible, and at the same time believe in a personal God." For "as certainly as the creation of the world was a miracle, so certainly is the Bible the result of a miraculous influence."

(1) As to the Old Testament Scriptures.

(a) The authors of the Old Testament claim to be inspired. This is manifest in their writings by their forms of expression: "The Lord spake by his servant," or, "The word of the Lord came"; also, by positive declaration, "And he said, Hear now my words" (Num. 12: 6); again, "And the Lord spake unto Moses." Men were

Old
Testament
Claims
Inspiration.

chosen as prophets: "And the Lord came . . . and called . . . Samuel. . . . And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold I will do," etc. (I. Sam. 3: 10, 11.) Also; "Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms" (Jer. 1: 9, 10).

**Inspiration
of the Old
Testament
Recognized
by Christ
and the
Apostles.**

(b) It is very clear that Christ and his apostles recognized the Old Testament as inspired, and regarded it with as much reverence as did the Jews. In all their arguments and disputations, the Jewish Scriptures were the court of appeal. Christ said to the Jews, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me." Again, "Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?" He sometimes charged them with being ignorant of the Scriptures, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures." His reply to Satan, when tempted, is very explicit, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Perhaps the most forceful word of our Lord to the point now under consideration was the following, which was uttered after his resurrection, "These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, how that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the Psalms concerning me. Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the Scriptures." "Again another scripture saith, They shall

look on him whom they pierced." Thus the Christ, from the beginning to the end of his eventful ministry, in the wilderness of temptation, and even on the cross, as he lifted with his pierced hands empires from off their hinges and turned the currents of centuries from their deep-worn channels, ever and anon appealed to the Scriptures in the emphatic words, "Thus it is written," etc.

(c) The apostles gave to the Old Testament a similar endorsement. Paul, in his second epistle to Timothy, says, "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching," etc. This passage does not refer to all of our canonical books, as some have interpreted, but to the books of the Old Testament. St. Peter, in his second epistle, says, "No prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost." The epistle to the Hebrews abounds in quotations from the Old Testament. "God, having of old times spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son." "Wherefore, even as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation," etc. "He saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah," etc. All these quotations from the Hebrews are found in the Book of Psalms, except the last, which is from Jeremiah, and each passage represents God as the speaker, and the same is true of every quotation throughout this epistle.

Again, in the first epistle to the Corinthians, we read,

“For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.” Indeed, more than two hundred passages from the Old Testament which have been quoted by the authors of the New as of divine authority, might be here introduced, but it is not necessary.

**Jews of
Christ's
Day
Regarded
Old Testa-
ment as
Inspired.**

It may not, however, be amiss to state in this connection, that the Jews in the day of Christ regarded the books of the Old Testament as divinely inspired, not only in respect to their doctrines, but also in everything that pertained to them. Josephus says, “They being only prophets that have written the original and earliest accounts of things, as they learned them from God himself by inspiration.” He adds, “But it is become natural to all Jews to esteem these books to contain divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be, to be willing to die for them.”¹

(2) The inspiration of the New Testament is proved from its own testimony. The sacred writers insist upon and persist in the infallibility of their statements. St. Paul says, “Which things also we speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth.” In the first epistle to the Thessalonians it is declared that “when ye received from us the word of message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God.”

**The New
Testament
Claims to be
Inspired.**

The spirit of prophecy was given to them. In I. Timothy we read, “But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith,” etc. This divine endowment claimed by the apostle was prom-

¹ Apion, Book I.

ised to them by our Lord. His words are, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive" (John 14: 16, R. V.). This Comforter was to teach them and testify of Christ: "But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you." "But when the Comforter is come . . . even the Spirit of truth, . . . he shall bear witness of me: and ye also bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." In the sixteenth chapter of John the promise of a full and complete inspiration is given: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come." Jesus, in speaking to his disciples of the coming persecution, cautioned them against being over-anxious about what they should say. "For," said he, "it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost." It is manifest from these and many more passages that might be cited, that the promise of inspiration was made by Christ to his disciples, and also that the apostles claimed to be in the possession of the fulfillment of that promise while speaking and writing.

3. It is most manifest, therefore, that each writer of the sacred Scriptures claimed that he was inspired to write as he did, and that the communication was from God. This, also, was the light in which the church received and has held the Holy Scriptures and their au-

**Each Writer
of Sacred
Scripture
Claims
Inspiration.**

thors. There is a remarkable statement by Justin Martyr respecting the spread of the gospel in his day, and also of the qualification of the men who wrote the Gospels, "There is not a nation either of Greek or barbarian, or of any other name, even of those who wander in tribes, and live in tents, amongst whom prayers and thanksgiving are not offered to the Father and Creator of the universe by the name of the crucified Jesus."¹ Justin Martyr wrote not more than thirty years after Pliny, and about one hundred and sixty years after the ascension. Irenæus, a disciple of Polycarp, declares, "The Scriptures were dictated by the Spirit of God, and that therefore it is wickedness to contradict them, and sacrilegious to alter them." He also says, "The gospel was first preached, and afterwards, by the will of God, committed to writing, that it might be for time to come *the foundation and pillar of our faith.*"

Surely it was the intention of the writers of the Holy Scriptures and of our blessed Lord, also, that the church should receive and regard their sacred writings as having been dictated and rendered infallible by the Holy Spirit. Says Von Oosterzee, "He who will acknowledge in Scripture no higher than a purely human character comes in collision, not only with our Lord's word and that of his witnesses, but also with the Christian consciousness of all ages."²

4. *The nature of its contents and the unity of the book itself are proofs of its inspiration.*

(1) As we read the sacred pages of both the Old Testa-

**Proven by
Character
of the
Contents.**

¹ Dial cum Tryph.

² Dogmatics, page 199.

ment and the New, we meet in the writers all the frailties and weaknesses of men of like passions with ourselves. Sometimes they are courageous and daring; at other times they betray a pitiable weakness and cowardice. At one time they speak and act like saints; at another foul blots appear upon their character, and we hear the shrill voice of an aged seer ring out the keen, cutting words, "Thou art the man." But amid all this diversity of weakness and strength, it has, in truth, been said of these writers by Canon Farrar, "Nor has the widest learning and the acutest ingenuity of skepticism ever pointed to one complete and demonstrable error of fact or doctrine in the Old and New Testament." The same writer says: "Yet all this infinite diversity is, like the diversity of nature, merged in a yet more marvelous unity. Kings, prophets, warriors, historians, poets, exiles, shepherds, gatherers of sycamore fruit, fishermen, tax-gatherers, 'we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.' Whether we read the passionate pleadings of an afflicted Chaldean noble or the rhythmic utterances of a great Mesopotamian sorcerer; whether it be the cynical confession of a sated worldling or the pathetic cry of a guilty and repentant king; whether it be the exultant thanksgiving for some splendid deliverance or the impassioned denunciation of some intolerable wrong; whether it be the stately music of some gorgeous vision or the brief letter of an aged prisoner recommending the forgiveness of an unprofitable slave, we feel that in these, there reigns throughout a divine coherency, an unbroken unity; we feel that the long history is also a symbol and a prophecy; that each writer

**Writers of
Bible were
Human and
Imperfect.**

was but the instrument, often the wholly unconscious instrument, of purposes loftier than his own, and the utterer of language often deeper than he himself could understand; we feel that in the Old Testament the New is prefigured; in the New the Old is fulfilled. From beginning to end we recognize the truth that though God is in all history, never had any nation a history so significant as that of this nation; none have ever known as these knew, or taught as these teach, the holiness of God and the majesty of man."

(2) In this sacred book the student who pursues its pages meets with much that attracts and inspires the thoughtful. In the Old Testament, all that is grand and sublime in the majesty of God as creator and ruler of a vast universe is portrayed. From the opening to the closing sentence of the book the description is ever in keeping with the dignity of the subject. The inhabitants of all worlds wait with anxious eye turned to him as the God of providence. Back of the storm and behind the thundering, warring elements he sits, a being of infinite majesty, "not clearing the guilty, but merciful, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth."

In the New, Christ introduces him as "our Father which art in heaven." He who was once the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob is now the God of the whole human race. What was once the creed of a tribe is now the religion of the world. Sacrifices, rites, and ceremonies, which, in the Old, typified something better to come, in the New are realized in the image of God, reflected from the human soul, which is the highest ideal of man and the crowning glory of God.

**The
Thought or
Ideas of
Bible
Denote
Inspiration.**

Also, the marvelous purity of its teachings, its lofty ideal on the subject of morals, its clear, faithful delineations of the effects of irreligion and profligacy, the correctness of which is verified by our experience in this life; also, the many truths which it reveals, not discoverable by reason, such as a future life with rewards and punishments, immortality, the resurrection of the dead, and a future judgment, all of which are of the deepest and most abiding interest to us, and which, in their nature and tendency, elevate the thoughts and affections of men from things perishing to things spiritual and abiding,—all, all carry conviction to man that God speaks to him in this volume of his written word.

Of Jesus Christ, says Goethe, "I esteem the Gospels to be thoroughly genuine, for there shines forth from them the reflected splendor of a sublimity proceeding from the person of Jesus Christ of so divine a kind as only the divine could ever have manifested upon earth."¹

"How petty," says Rousseau, "are the books of the philosophers, with all their pomp, compared with the Gospels! Can it be that writings at once so sublime and so simple are the works of mere men? Can he whose life they tell, be of mere men? Can he whose life they tell be himself no more than a mere man? . . . What a loftiness in his maxims, what profound wisdom in his words! What presence of mind, what delicacy and aptness in his replies! What an empire over his passions! Where is the man, where is the sage, who knows how to act, suffer, and die without weakness and display? . . . The Jews could never have struck this

**The
Faultless
Life of
Christ Set
Forth in
Bible
Manifests
Inspiration.**

¹ Conversations with Ekermann, III., 371

tone, or thought of this morality, and the gospel has characteristics of truthfulness so grand, so striking, so perfectly inimitable that their inventors would be even more wonderful than he whom they portray."¹

As Jesus Christ is the only perfect, faultless life and the only worthy pattern of all the men who have lived, so the Bible is the only perfect book of all the books written. The spirit that it breathes is not the spirit of man, but the Spirit of God. It is strictly cosmopolitan in its spirit, and belongs to every age and is adapted to every race of men. It is as broad as the family of mankind, and is as emphatically God's book as the race is God's offspring.

¹ Emile, I, 4: 109, III.

CHAPTER IV.

MIRACLES—THEIR CREDIBILITY AND INTENT.

1. MAN is capable of gaining knowledge and arriving at the truth. This he does in two ways: the one by experience, the other by observation, or the experience of others. The former is expensive and slow; the latter quick and cheap. The foolish learn only in the school of experience, but the wise in both. Also, two methods are open to him by which he may arrive at a knowledge of the truth. The one is by the exercise of the human faculties, observation, intuition, reflection, reason, judgment; the other is by a direct supernatural communication from Heaven, of facts that could not be obtained by any known operation of the human mind. In such a communication or series of communications the sacred Scriptures claim to have originated. Two facts should ever be kept in mind by the Bible student. The one is, the Scriptures claim that the communication was from God. The other is, that they claim man was the recorder of the communication; that is, God communicated the Scriptures, man recorded them, therefore the recording was human, the supernatural communication divine. Now, the authenticity, both of the Old and the New Testament, and their inspiration having been established, the next step to be taken is the examination of their contents.

**Modes of
Obtaining
Knowledge.**

**Old
Testament
Promises
an Am-
bassador.**

The church believes and teaches that the claims set forth in the sacred Scriptures are true and of divine authority. In these Scriptures one of the most significant features is, that they profess to teach *a divinely-revealed religion* expressly for the betterment of mankind and the glory of God. This religious system is called Christianity. In the Old Testament, almost from its opening pages to its close, reference is had to an ambassador to be sent from God, who should "redeem Israel." In the New Testament, constant and grand reference is had to Jesus Christ as the Saviour and Teacher, sent from God, of whom "Moses in the law, and the prophets did write," "Jesus the Son of God." In turn, Jesus persistently appealed to the miracles he performed as the evidence of his divine commission. His miracles, he insisted, were his credentials from the court of Heaven of his divine ambassadorship. "The works that I do" was his constant appeal. "Go your way and tell John, . . . the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up." Such were some of his miracles—work of a superhuman character, and altogether outside of the natural course of things, and this also may be said of all the miracles recorded, both in the Old and the New Testament. They are superhuman acts, and are not included nor accounted for in the natural course of things.

**Miracles
Were
Christ's
Credentials.**

**Definition
of Miracle.**

2. A miracle, then, is an event which nature's forces cannot produce, taking place in connection with a person professing to be sent from God, and intended to be the proof of his divine mission. The occurrence is purely supernatural, and must be referred to God, the author

of nature. It is an act the like of which has never occurred by natural causation, and never will occur by natural causation. An acute thinker says, "A miracle is a fact the like of which has never occurred or ever will occur, but for the same purpose." What are the naked facts in the case of miracles? Since the world began it was not known that a deaf man at a word received his hearing, or that a man actually dead four days and stank, at a word, in a moment, stood up in vigor and activity; or that a man born blind, by having his eyes anointed with spittle and clay, instantly received his sight; or that, at a word, the tempest was hushed and the sea calmed; or that, by the stretching of a rod over a mighty river, the waters rolled back and a whole nation passed over dry-shod. These and like events the Scriptures affirm on different occasions and for specific purposes, without precedent, and unparalleled, have taken place, all of which are miraculous. But because a miracle is a supernatural event, it is not to be inferred that the event is something not manifest, a something that cannot be known and apprehended by man.

3. To distinguish between true miracles and a class of occurrences recorded in the Bible, which stand midway between the miracles and the ordinary occurrences of nature is vital; and it is readily admitted that the line which separates is not well defined. Owing to a failure upon the part of the apologist to make the needed distinction, not unfrequently he has put a dangerous weapon into the hand of his antagonist. It may be said, in truth, a sparseness of miracles obtains throughout the Scriptures far beyond what men ordinarily would ex-

**Miracles
Distin-
guished
from Ex-
traordinary
Occurrences
of Nature.**

pect; and yet they are of a sufficient number to accomplish the purpose for which they were introduced. The true miracles performed were not to gratify vain curiosity, nor to secure some selfish interest for the performer, but only to benefit others. In the marvelous life of Jesus, in his hunger in the wilderness, thirsting at the well of Jacob, in Sychar, pressed by his enemies, betrayed by his friend, scourged, spat upon, and crucified at last, notwithstanding, he was the power behind and above nature, and controlled her forces; and while he could have called to his Father, who would have put more than twelve legions of angels at his disposal, he performed no miracle in his behalf; all were in the interest of others. Now, such occurrences in his life after his resurrection, as appearing in the house with his disciples, "the doors having been shut," and his walk and his talk with the two on their way to Emmaus; also, his appearing to his disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, as well as some peculiar occurrences which transpired prior to his crucifixion, such as his escape from the multitude at Nazareth, and his act of ridding the temple of the money-changers, seem to be unnecessarily placed in the category of his miracles. Indeed, it is doubtful, to say the least, if the recorders of these occurrences in their Master's eventful life regarded them as miraculous, but two have often found their place there by false interpretation. Now, there is a class of events which stood midway between the class of occurrences just mentioned and clear, unquestioned miracles, such as the Christ's resurrection, opening the eyes of the blind, the burning bush, and Elijah's calling fire

out of heaven upon his altar at Mt. Carmel. Such by some are called mediate miracles. In this class of events there is both a miraculous application and adaptation of the forces of nature to them. They are occurrences produced by natural laws supernaturally applied. In this class is included such events as the Noachian deluge, Joseph sold into Egypt, destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites, and others recorded both in the Old and the New Testament. Then, with this distinction before the mind relative to the events unequivocally miraculous, and the mediate miracles recorded in the Scriptures, and, holding each in its own category, we proceed to discuss the credibility of miracles in general.

**Credibility
of Miracles.**

We again state in a broader sense what we have already implied in part, namely, that those who are reputed in the Scriptures to have claimed that their commission was from God always appealed to the miracles which they performed as sufficient evidence. Moses did this at the court of Pharaoh, so did Elijah on Mt. Carmel, Christ also did the same thing, and when he commissioned his disciples he promised like power from the Father upon them.

It will not be questioned by well informed men but that at, or about the time of the birth of Christ, an expectation widespread obtained that an event of that character was about to occur. That when he arrived at manhood or about the age of thirty, he drew about him a small band of men, Jews, and that to them he actually professed to have come from heaven, the spirit world, and that he really and truly was God's ambassador and the

**Messiah
Expected at
the Time
of the
Advent.**

bearer of important messages from his Father to the world. That to confirm his disciples and others in the belief of his divine ambassadorship, he gave sight to men who were born blind, and, by a word, raised the dead to life, and other like superhuman acts, and also that he endowed his disciples with a like power. That subsequently he was crucified, dead, buried, and that on the third day he rose from the dead. The claim that his disciples set up in the gospel was, that it had brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, and that by his resurrection Christ had abolished death. The claim rested on the belief that he had appeared and talked with a body of men at different times after his resurrection, and men, too, who had not previously believed that the Christ himself was to die and again rise.

These men, and especially his disciples, accepted his resurrection as a demonstration of the fact, first, that there is life after death; and, second, that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God—God's ambassador, man's Saviour.

**Disciples
Accepted
Evidence of
Resurrec-
tion.**

These men who were the eye-witnesses of Jesus before and after his resurrection, believed that he was the first-fruits of a system introduced from heaven among men, which, when perfected, would embrace all earth's sorrowing children, who were united to their Master by a living faith in the same glorious immortality that was manifested in their risen Lord. Mark the emphasis of Paul on the resurrection of Christ and the importance he attached to it. "If Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we wit-

nessed of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised: and if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."

His resurrection was admitted as a matter of fact, as was also his personal ascension, in the presence of many, up into heaven. These events did not occur in secret, but openly, as the record states that he appeared to as many as five hundred persons at one time, after his resurrection. But the objector says: "The guardsmen who watched the sepulcher in which the body of Christ was laid said, "His disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept." If they were asleep, how did they know what became of the body in the tomb they were guarding? The record says these guardsmen were bribed to make this false statement. But from the very fact of the disciples' belief in the resurrection of their Lord they put it into history, and that history is with us now; they braved scorn, insult, derision, hardship, poverty, torture, and death itself that the gospel of their Lord might be preached and the commission he gave to them be carried out. They received it not only as a matter-of-fact demonstration of his ambassadorship from God the Father, but also as a proof conclusive of life after death. And it may be here stated, that unless we allow that Christ rose from the dead the world has no physical proof in favor of immortality, but to admit the fact, a future state becomes more than probable—it becomes possible, an established fact in history.

Resurrection a Proof of Christ's Ambassadorship and of Life after Death.

The proofs of revelation are sufficiently strong to pro-

**Presump-
tion against
Miracles
as not
Scientific.**

duce belief, were it not for a supposed presumption which to many minds seems to rest against them; that is, a supposed presumption against miracles, on the ground that it would not be scientific to admit their possibility, on the one hand; and, on the other, even if they were possible, it would be unphilosophical to admit that they could be proved. This presumption rests on the assumption that an event produced not by a natural law would be an action without a cause. This is a misconception, and is the result of holding a false notion relative to natural law. Natural law is God's will exercised in nature, as is manifested in established sequences of natural phenomena. Thus God is the author and cause of all natural law, which is the exertion of his will over nature, primarily to accomplish his own purposes. When a miracle, then, occurs, it is the result of the exertion of the will of God and author of nature to accomplish a specific purpose, which primarily is his own. Thus miracles are, in this sense, not out of accord with nature, but in accord with her, the same Creator and Judge acting in both, and the Author both of natural and supernatural phenomena.

1. In a miracle, the end to be accomplished is special; a dead man is to be brought to life, a rod is to become a serpent. It is for a specific purpose, God signing his ambassador's credentials. Pharaoh is to be convinced that Moses is God-sent. Every miracle in the Bible is special, and every purpose is specific, but all tending to the accomplishing of a general, grand purpose, namely, to establish the divine authority of revelation and its religion among men.

But, it is said, nature is uniform in all her works, and miracles are out of accord with that uniformity. That is true only in a sense, that is, in so far as human experience and observation go. But no man who is acquainted with the best science of the closing decade of this best century of the ages would venture to say that nature has always been uniform in the sense the objector uses the term,—that the sun, in the infinite sweep of eternity that is past, always rose and set as it now does, and that the moon and the stars always shone out as they now do; that the first oak-tree sprang from an acorn, which grew on an oak-tree, as acorns now do. The material universe has not been from everlasting time; science says it had its beginning in time and will end in time, and thus declares creation the miracle of miracles. Man was not always an inhabitant of his present home—this earth. On this subject science speaks out with no uncertain sound. Geological science shows clearly that our planet was once a molten mass and not capable of sustaining any forms of life. This truth God has recorded in the rock-written history of the dead ages. Man as well as other forms of life had a beginning in time. No scientific man will claim that his advent here was in accord with the present order of generation. In the language of modern science, “Our modern knowledge enables us to look back almost with certitude to the time when there was nothing but gravitating matter and its potential energy throughout the expanse, . . . and thus forming in time separate solar or stellar systems. We have thus reached the beginning as well as the end of the present visible universe, and have

**Objection
Based on
Lack of
Uniformity.**

come to the conclusion that it began in time and will in time come to an end.”¹ Says the same scientific writer: “Now we believe that an extension of purely scientific logic desires us to receive as quite certain the occurrence of two events which are as incomprehensible as any miracle. These are: the introduction of visible matter and energy and visible living things into the universe. Furthermore, we are led by scientific analogy to regard the agency in virtue of which these two astounding events were brought about as an intelligent agency, an agency whose choice of the time for action is determined by considerations similar in their nature to those which influence a human being when he chooses the proper moment for the accomplishment of his purposes.”

If, then, it be true that science acknowledges an event so stupendous as that of creation, for no Bible miracle is greater and further removed from the natural course of events, how can the objector on scientific grounds object to the Christian miracles? Is it not clear that to admit the miracle of creation not only sweeps from the field every form of supposed scientific presumption against miracles, but also removes the discussion regarding miracles wholly from the domain of science? And, too, for the very best of reasons, namely, that pure scientific logic admits the occurrence of events equally as great and none the less supernatural.

2. There is a principle in nature that seems to be at variance at least with one of nature's laws. Gravitation would bind all matter to the earth as with a chain, but life breaks the chain. Life in the lily, in the very

**Life a
Higher Law
than
Gravitation**

¹ Unseen Universe, page 128.

teeth of the law of gravitation, which would draw it to the earth, pushes it up until it throws open its corolla to the bright sunlight, a thing of beauty. Life in the bird bids defiance to gravity, and at pleasure it rises from the earth and swims in the air. In a creature whose knowledge and experience were limited to bodies without life and always in a state of rest, the information that there is a principle of life, and such and such are some of its phenomena, would cause, doubtless, many false presumptions to arise, not only against the principle itself, but against the phenomena in particular. All these presumptions would spring from his limited experience and rest on his lack of knowledge in each particular case; but experience in the world of activity and observation on the course of nature would soon dissipate all his false presumptions. Just so with man relative to miracles; every supposed presumption against them rests on his limited experience and lack of knowledge of facts pertaining to the universe. When St. Paul spoke to the Greeks of the "resurrection of the dead," "some laughed," but not one of the eye-witnesses of the resurrection of Lazarus or the raising of the widow's son either laughed or questioned the reality of the fact; at least, neither friend nor foe recorded anything to the contrary. It is so with all the recorded miracles of the Bible; no eye-witness to them, either friend or foe, questioned their reality. True, some attempted to account for them in some way other than by divine power, and thus unwittingly admitted the reality of the events in question.

3. The objection to miracles seems to imply that the

**God not
Bound by
Nature or
by Fate.**

infinite Father may not change the course of his providence other than man has experienced it to be, for the benefit of his children. Surely, the Almighty Will is not bound either by nature or by fate. We admit that the earthly parent may change his course of government in his family, and he really does, sometimes by giving more, sometimes by withholding knowledge from his offspring. To recognize a like freedom and disposition in the infinitely wise and infinitely good Father is all that is necessary to admit of miracles. God is not limited in his resources, but keeps his hand on all his works. Man's difficulty seems to lie in the fact that his own knowledge is finite and his experience very limited, and that he is unwilling to concede to God what he knows himself not to possess. The human being who has no knowledge of the growth of vegetation, who has never seen a forest or witnessed the building of a house or the erection of any other building, who has no knowledge of the lumber out of which the house even in which he was born and reared was constructed, or of any other building, or of the manner in which that timber grew and the process by which it was manufactured into lumber and then constructed into a house,—if, I say, such a human being were to be placed in the great forests of the State of Washington, and to comprehend, as he looked upon and marveled at the growth of the forest, that this was one of the steps taken by the Creator of the universe toward erecting a house like to that in which he was born, would it be less a marvel to him than to be told that at a word a blind man had received his sight? Or, again, as he looked upon the

woodsman felling the trees, and the lumberman with his great saws ripping the trees into boards, planks, shingles, and scantlings, if he were told that these men were engaged in erecting houses and barns and building cities, would there not arise in his mind at every stage in the processes thus far named presumptions against the building of a house? It is only when the end is attained, the structure complete, that the human mind can trace back, step by step, the different processes that led up to its completion.

It will be readily admitted that, even if man had knowledge beforehand that a revelation was to be given him from heaven, he in no wise could determine what the nature of that revelation would be, what would be the degrees of its evidence, whether it would be oral or written, whether it would be communicated from God direct to man or by angels, or by both; or what would be the nature of its evidence, whether it would be accompanied by miracles or not; or whether it would be given alike to all men at one and the same time; or whether it would be given through a series of years. The truth is, he could conclude nothing definitely beforehand about it. He might conjecture many things respecting it, but his conjectures would be as likely false as true. But there is one fact in revelation which stands out clear and definite, namely, its similarity to the whole scheme of nature. Nature's great truths are discovered only by those who seek after them, and her deep problems solved only by the patient, faithful investigator. Just so in revelation, doubts are dispelled, and the truth becomes apparent only to the earnest truth-

seeker in God's Word; for it is a fact that, inasmuch as man is made a partaker of the divine nature, and that the ideas that develop in the human reason are, at least in part, copies of the archetype that dwells in the divine mind, he may rise to the apprehension and recognition of the immutable and eternal principles of righteousness, and by communing with that which is divine—the Word of God—he may be inducted into, and made acquainted with the deep things of God.

Nature
Orderly
Under Law.

The particular thing in nature is order, the greatest principle is benevolence—the universal adaptation of all things to the happiness of sentient beings, the supply of all wants, the alleviation of all suffering. The grand harmony and order that obtains in nature is marvelous, and one of the great lessons which it teaches is, that its Author must be a God of order. One kingdom stands above another—the animal, the vegetable, the mineral. Each has its separate departments, the one not infringing upon the other. The seasons, in order, come and go—spring, summer, autumn, and winter. These, in turn, and in their order, give seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, and years. What order, what strange regularity! And all, too, in the interest of benevolence, happiness, and the alleviation of the sufferings and wants of God's creatures. So marvelous is this order, this uniformity, "that the laws of the physical universe are resolvable into numerical relations, and therefore capable of being represented by mathematical formulæ." This fact was discovered and taught by Plato.

In the sacred Scriptures a like order obtains, while

the same end—benevolence—is kept in view. It opens its pages with the history of creation, the fall of man ensues, then follows his redemption, and the books close with his glorification. Step by step in universal order, truth after truth is unfolded, book after book is written, until the whole ground of human religious need is covered. It not only lays bare the world's great sore and sorrow, but definitely states the cause, and points out the only remedy for its cure. Every line that it contains, either directly or indirectly, was written to meet the wants and alleviate the sorrows of man. Like nature, the particular thing in it is order, the greatest principle in it is benevolence—the universal adaptation of all things to the happiness of sentient beings, the supply of all want, the alleviation of all suffering.

**Scriptures
Orderly and
Benevolent.**

The sacred Scriptures have a single aim—one end in view, which is never lost sight of; it is never obscured, never darkened. There is no turning aside in by-paths, or words used to darken council. But, like the rush of a mighty river to the sea, it holds its way steadily to the goal. This single aim, this goal of the Scriptures is the moral elevation and perfection of man.

**The Aim of
Scripture
is the Moral
Perfection
of Man.**

“It aims and it tends in all its doctrines, precepts, and promises, to rescue men from the power of moral evil; to unite them to God by filial love, and to one another in the bonds of brotherhood; to inspire them with a philanthropy as meek and unconquerable as that of Christ; and to kindle intense desire, hope, and pursuit of celestial and immortal virtue.” This unvarnished, aye, this untarnished singleness of design which runs through their religious records is no mean evidence of

itself that it is superhuman. It is without a parallel in the world's literature.

Now let the chapter be closed with an illustration; and while it is true that the figures used and the comparisons drawn do not always meet the case in hand, it is not because there is an intent to deceive on the one hand, or that the case to be illustrated is without truth in point of fact on the other; but, rather, it grows out of human limitations.

Suppose that, for untold generations, at a given season of the year, a peculiar class of creatures appeared in our world; that they had the capacity for taking food and drink, and that both were necessary for their sustenance, but that there was no food or drink such as they needed, provided in nature for them; or, suppose that food and drink by nature had been provided, but that they had neither instinct nor reason to direct them to the bounties provided by nature, nor did they know how to use it when it was given to them; that they, further, did not know or perceive the difference between land and water, day and night. Now they plunge into the stream and are destroyed, others of them walk over ledges and fall over precipices and are dashed to pieces, while others, again, perish on the plains for want of nourishment. For generations the same strange creatures have been coming, and still they come, only to wander in distress, to famish, and to die. You may turn over every page of written history and you will find no record of such creatures as we have supposed, and then you may go to the records of the rock-written history of the dead ages, and there,

too, you will search for them in vain. Nature's God has never brought into being a creature for whose wants he has not made ample provision. "He feeds the young ravens when they cry."

Now, let this illustration be applied to man as he really is. Take into account the dignity of his nature and the place he holds among earth's creatures. How much superior he is to the creation by which he is surrounded. He alone of earth's creatures is endowed with reason; all below him, with animal sense. Take into account, too, the difference between mere animal sense and the infinite faculties of a being such as man is. Now add to all this, that man, the creature to be compared, not only has the capacity to acquire knowledge, but also to cultivate and develop his faculties, reason, memory, and affection, and that he really does this in accord with a natural law of his being, and all, too, without any knowledge whatever of a future life. Now suppose that when he has thus reached his intellectual zenith, with all his aspirations for an endless life in tune to the most exquisite and sound thoughts and feelings, amid his joys and his sorrows, his pleasures and his pains, as he stands upon this earth as it rolls in majestic silence through the mighty void, with death and decay all around, and in the presence of an open grave, there comes no voice from beyond the tomb to assure him that he shall live after death—to assure him that death does not end all. This really is man's condition if the Bible is not true; and would not such a state of human nature be more deplorable, more sad, more mournful, and more out of accord and at war with the divine good-

ness than any disaster that could at all befall animal nature? The Author of nature has provided amply for all the physical wants of his creatures, including man. If he has thus made provision for the lower nature of man, is it reconcilable with his divine goodness if he has left unprovided man's higher, spiritual nature? Man's greatest need to secure his happiness here, and to hold him to a worthy life, is an unmistakable communication from the infinite Father that death does not end all, that the soul is immortal, and how he must live to secure the divine favor. This the Holy Scriptures claim, and Christians believe them to be; and God Almighty's seal to his book is the miracles that were performed by those whom he sent as his ambassadors to make such a needed and unmistakable communication.

CHAPTER V.

MIRACLES—CONTINUED.

Two things at least are now manifest: first, that the Founder of Christianity and his disciples claimed to perform miracles, and that the miracles which they performed were the evidence of their divine commission; and, second, that the people believed the miracles thus wrought to be genuine. Now were the disciples and people deceived or not? is a very important inquiry.

**Were the
Disciples
Deceived
Regarding
Miracles?**

1. No well informed person will question the intelligence of the age in which Jesus was born, nor the general enlightenment that obtained in his native land at the time of his nativity. The age of Greek literature had culminated and was passing, or had passed; the Latin empire then ruled the world, and Roman literature was in its zenith. The books of the Old Testament were complete; all the Apocryphal literature of the Hebrews had already been written, and their wisest doctors and priests then held sway in the Sanhedrim. The world's greatest poets had lived, written, and passed away—Homer, David, Hesiod, Æschylus, Horace, and Virgil. Philosophy had already swept over the entire domain of human thought, and some of the closest thinkers representing any age had already lived, and the world was in the possession of their investigations—Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero, the orator, statesman, and author.

**The Age
Was
Intelligent.**

At the time of the advent, the two popular systems of philosophy were the skeptical and the Epicurean. The former turned religion into a jest and denied the possibility of arriving at truth, and placed the mind on a sea of doubt; the latter placed human happiness in ease, which ultimately led to, and taught that wanton luxury and a supreme indifference, both to the present and the future, secured the highest good. There was another system, the Stoical. This maintained that virtue was the highest good. It certainly had many virtues, and maintained some noble principles; but its cold indifference to human sorrow and suffering, its abnegation of human want, its stern self-reliance, and extravagant exaggerations of its own virtues placed it in strange contrast with, and in opposition to the whole genius of Christianity.

At this time, also, flourished the Jewish Alexandrian philosophy. It consisted in blending the doctrines of Plato with Jewish theology, and was known as theosophic or theologic. All these systems, after so many ages of patient thought and investigation, failed to reveal God, and resulted only in a heartless skepticism. This result not being satisfactory, men turned their attention to Oriental theosophy and sought there to find a solution of the problem of human destiny. "Chief among the religious systems of the East in practical influence on the Grecian mind was the Jewish theology, as presented in the Hebrew Scriptures, and which, as blended with the lofty idealism of Plato, formed this Jewish-Hellenic school." This system opposed the divine to the earthly, contemning the mate-

**Alexan-
drian
Philosophy.**

rial and sensible, "requiring an ascetic emancipation of the soul from the bondage of sense, and believing in a divine revelation to man in the state of enthusiasm." How far this system of mysticism was removed from the benevolent spirit and moral genius of Christianity is too well known to need naming here.

These schools of philosophy, while they could not have given rise to Christianity, nor in any sense have favored its promulgation, were, nevertheless, well adapted to prepare the public mind to investigate the new system of religion and to critically examine the grounds of its claims; and if there were any defects in the proofs which it introduced as evidence, to have exposed them.

Civilization and learning, in the ancient world, were then at their zenith, and, while the age of Pericles and Alcibiades had passed when Greece was reduced to a Roman province, yet Athens was still a great commercial center, and the Areopagus the most sacred and reputable court of law in the then known world. This court had then, and has had a world reputation for its legal research and the impartiality and weight of its decisions. It is an admitted fact that, while the Roman sword conquered Greece, Grecian philosophy in turn conquered Rome. Julius Cæsar was a pupil of Milo, and Cicero himself was a pupil of both Milo and Philo, the latter of whom was a refugee from Athens at Rome during the civil war. Roman senators as well as other men, not a few, either sent their sons to Greece to be educated or had Greek instructors brought to Rome to educate their families. Now it was in this bright, intellectual age, "the golden age of Rome," that

Jesus was born. And, too, it was an age "proverbial for its preëminence in literature and the arts." Augustus Cæsar was on the throne of Rome at the time, the twelfth year of his reign, and about all that civilization and learning could achieve for the world, it had the full and unembarrassed opportunity of accomplishing during his reign. The student of history who is familiar with the classics of the Augustan age, yes, with all forms of learning in that age of culture, knows well that no other age in human history was so peculiarly fitted to find the truth and expose error as was the era of the advent of the Son of Man.

Viewing Christianity from this lofty attitude, it occupies a most enviable position. Not in an unlettered, but to an age celebrated by story and immortalized in song, Jesus first announced himself. He sent out his apostles to preach the gospel over classic ground, and established his church in the land of Euclid, Socrates, and Plato, of Demosthenes and Longinus, of Solon, Lycurgus, and Priam, of Homer, Æschylus, and Pindar; in the classic lands of the yellow Tiber, where Horace and Virgil, Terence and Varro had sung their liquid measures, and where Livy, Sallust, Cicero, and Atticus lived and wrote, the historic land, whose classic halls had often reëchoed to the boisterous Pholloc and the thundering dithyramb. "Countries that had given birth to such men were not likely to shut their eyes upon the gradual encroachment of a religion that counteracted all their previous notions, and that poured contempt upon their altars and their gods." Look for a moment at the constellation of great men who lived

during the age Jesus and his apostles lived, or about that time—Seneca, Lucian, Quintus Curtius, the Elder Pliny, Tacitus, Martial, Epictetus, Josephus, Quintilian; these are the men under whose eyes, as it were, the gospel was preached and the miracles recorded in the New Testament performed.

Hence it will be seen that, while Christ's immediate disciples were not men of great learning, yet they, with their Master, preached his gospel and performed their miracles "in the presence of men and women of culture and learning, who believed not only their preaching, but also believed the "mighty works"—the miracles—which were wrought by them to be genuine. The best evidence they could give of their belief was just to do what they did—"become his disciples." Now, the only reward the Master promised his disciples, and to all who would become his followers, was, in a word, "eternal life." The proof he gave to them of his divine commission was his miracles. They were so situated as to know whether his miracles were genuine or spurious. If his miracles were spurious, that is, if the proof of his divine commission was spurious, then he was a fraud, and his divine commission was a farce, and his promised reward—eternal life—was a myth. His disciples and those who waited on his ministry, and were eye-witnesses of his miracles, surely knew whether his miracles were spurious or genuine. If they knew them to be spurious, they also knew he was a deceiver; if they knew he was a deceiver, they also knew his promise of eternal life was a deception, for then it is not his to give. Would a reasonable man

become the follower of another whom he knew to be a deceiver in hope of receiving a reward such as eternal life, when he, at the same time, knew that the only proof which he gave of his divine commission was a fraud, which divine commission, also, was the only guarantee that he gave of his ability to bestow eternal life upon his followers?

To assume, then, that Jesus was not God's ambassador to earth to reveal the will of the Father to his children, is to assume that the disciples and recorders of his gospel were the followers of one whom they knew to be a deceiver in hope of receiving the reward of "eternal life" which he promised them, which eternal life they also knew existed only in the brain of their Master; moreover, that they went forth hazarding everything to preach a gospel which they knew to be false for the sake of one whom they knew had tried to deceive them, and for the sake, also, of a reward which, in so far as their Master was concerned, they knew did not exist. It requires here really more faith to doubt than it does to believe.

It was not only Jesus, the recognized founder of Christianity, who claimed to perform miracles, and to whom miraculous power was attributed, but his disciples and apostles made a like claim for themselves, based on the presumption of a miraculous gift having been bestowed upon them by their Master in accord with his special promise;¹ and to them also many miracles are ascribed. Now, these disciples and apostles surely knew whether they had this miraculous gift or

**Apostles
had Power
to Work
Miracles.**

¹ John 14: 12; Mark 16.

had it not; whether they really healed the sick and raised the dead, whether the man maimed in respect to his limbs actually rose up and walked, and whether their fetters in prison actually fell off, and the prison door swung open at the approach or touch of the angel. Now, their whole course in all their after life was based on their professed conscious knowledge of the reality of the miraculous gift received from their Master, and then exercised by each for himself on afflicted humanity. In all this they were either deceived or not deceived, or they were deceivers. The former was not possible if the latter were true; that is, if they were deceivers, then they led their life of suffering and sorrow at the sacrifice of every earthly advantage and comfort, in conscious knowledge every moment that their professed miraculous gift, and pretended exercise of it, had no foundation whatever in truth, and that their supposed hope of, and belief in, immortality beyond the grave, based on the promises of Christianity, was a *lie*—but this is not reasonable, therefore the probabilities are that they were not deceived and were possessed of a miraculous gift, and that their claims were true. Also, they exercised this superhuman, miraculous gift in the presence of all the people, and their miracles were all open to inspection, and were critically examined, both by friends and foes.

2. The miracles wrought both by Christ and his followers were such as to be open at once to inspection by the senses. They were not sleight-of-hand performances, not the trick of a juggler; nor did they in any sense partake of that nature. A blind man received his

**The
Character
of the
Miracles
Made Them
Open to
Criticism
and
Detection
of Fraud.**

sight, a multitude was fed with a few loaves and fishes, a dead man was raised to life, a leper was healed—such are some of the miracles recorded in the New Testament. Also, these miracles were performed in the presence of mixed multitudes—men and women of all classes were witnesses of them, the Pharisee, the Sadducee, centurions, doctors, lawyers, Romans, Greeks, beggars, publicans, and scribes, yes, all classes were duly represented, so that it was truthfully said, “These things were not done in a corner.”

**Miracles
Cover a
Long
Period.**

3. Again, the miracles recorded in the Scriptures cover a period of not less than from fifteen hundred to two thousand years. The miracles of the New Testament extend over or cover a period of about seventy or eighty years, which period, too, as already stated, was the most enlightened that belongs to the ancient world. It need not be here stated how rapidly the chances of exposure multiply with the repetition of the same fraud performed or repeated by the same individual. But these miracles were wrought through the series of years mentioned, and in every instance were recognized as genuine. They were performed in the villages, in the towns, in the cities, and in the country places. Sometimes Christ, unaccompanied by his disciples, performed his miracles in the presence of the multitude, at other times in the presence of some or all of his disciples and apostles. They were not limited in the marvelous works to special occasions or particular localities, but wherever a great act of mercy was needed, or a great all-important truth of religion was to be established, or God's authority was to be vindicated, they performed

their miracles, and thus accomplished their divine commission.

4. Nor did either Christ or any one of his disciples ever fail in his attempt to perform a miracle. True, while the disciples were yet in the realm of doubt, they failed to cure the epileptic boy. "But Jesus rebuked him, and the demon went out, and the boy was cured from that hour."¹ The cures effected were instantaneous, and were not limited to any one class of diseases, but all manner of diseases, plagues, and evil spirits that obtained among the people were cured.² And they came in crowds to see and to hear and to investigate, that they might know the truth as well as to be healed.

Christ and Disciples Never Failed in Performing Miracles.

5. It is an admitted fact, not only that the gospel miracles at the immediate time they were wrought were at once subjected to the most rigid criticism, but that every generation in Christendom, from first to last, has subjected them to a like critical examination, and yet they stand untouched and untarnished in the category of Christian evidences. Every tide of human thought that has been hurled against them has been shattered and broken, and the God of destiny has swept them away. These miracles were not only exposed to the most public scrutiny, both of the learned and the illiterate, the wise and the unwise, but in their very nature they were such that any mind could examine them. They, being performed in the interests of a new religion, and given as its evidence of divine authority,—a religion, too, that declared war against every other

Subjected to Rigid Criticism in Every Age.

¹ Matt. 17: 17-19. ² Luke 7: 21.

religion and pronounced them all false, and that to succeed must annihilate all others,—would, in the very nature of the case, not only provoke every form of scrutiny and criticism, but also arouse a storm of opposition, both from the civil government and from every form of ecclesiasticism, as well as from paganism. It is also an admitted fact that as miracles multiplied, the storm of opposition increased, until the most bitter persecution was developed, and every miracle wrought was watched and critically investigated, with a view to exposing it. These miracles, also, were published and noised abroad, and the people flocked together to see the persons on whom they had been performed, and questioned them, as in the case of Lazarus. Their publication at the very time they were wrought, and their being appealed to as the evidence of the divine commission of those who performed them, and the place of their occurrence, and the naming of the persons who were the recipients of them, afforded every possible opportunity to the investigator to detect and expose the fraud, if any fraud obtained. The four Gospels and the Acts, according to the New Testament chronology of Zahn, were written in the following order and time: Matthew wrote his Aramaic Gospel in Palestine in 62; Mark completed his Gospel while in Rome in the summer of 64; Luke wrote his Gospel and the Acts in 75; and John completed his Gospel and his Epistles between 80 and 90. Zahn is one of the most conservative New Testament scholars on the continent, and no one will charge him with having set his dates of the Gospels too early, while others have assigned a date to

Matthew's Gospel not later than the seventh or eighth year after the death of our Lord; but be this as it may, even if the miracles received their first publication in the Gospels at the dates assigned by Zahn, yet ample opportunity for their examination was afforded, for the witnesses, or at least many of them, must have been yet alive. But it is a fact notorious in the gospel history that from the opening of Christ's ministry to the death of "the beloved disciple," at least, the working of miracles was one of the important factors in all their labors. Their miracles were admitted facts, even if they were attributed to demons. The people flocked to Jesus to be healed. The leper, the blind, the deaf, the afflicted of fever, all came or were brought to him, says the record.¹ And then the apostles, in "his name," wrought the wonderful works of God²; and appealed to the people as witnesses of the fact of his miracles. "Ye men of Israel," said Peter, "hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves know."³ These appeals must have stung to the heart every enemy of the new faith, and served as an additional incentive to investigation. They sought investigation, examination, and criticism at the hand of their opponents, and afforded to them every possible opportunity to detect and to ferret out every conceivable clue to imposture and fraud.

6. Now, the Author of Christianity was not a learned man, neither were his disciples. This is a fact

¹ Matt. 8: 3, 6, 15, 38. ² Acts 3: 16. ³ Acts 22: 22.

**Jesus and
Disciples
Unlearned
and so
Incapable
of Imposing
on the
Credulity of
the Age.**

that must be taken into account. "The Jews therefore marveled, saying [of Jesus], How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"¹ Of his disciples, at least of Peter and John, it was "perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men."² Nor were they men of wealth and influence. Of Jesus it was said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heavens have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head,"³ and his disciples were fishermen and tax-collectors. On the supposition that Jesus was only a man, and a pretender, how is it conceivable that he and a dozen men of only like qualifications, unlettered Jews with himself, could take their place among the educated and cultured of society in that marvelous age of learning, and establish such a stupendous religious fraud upon the world as Christianity? For it must be admitted that with his pierced hands he has lifted empires from off their hinges, revolutionized both the philosophy and religion of the ages, and turned the current of centuries from their deep-worn channels. Also, it must be borne in mind that amid the strifes, persecutions, and intimidations that obtained among the eye-witnesses to the miracles wrought by Jesus and his apostles not one, even, confessed that he was deceived or bribed, but always averred the truth of what he had seen and experienced. Judas, who betrayed his Lord, did not deny his miracles or charge the Master with deception, but confessed that he had betrayed "innocent blood."⁴ No, not one (while some, through the severest torture, abandoned their faith) ever professed that he had been

¹John 7: 15. ²Acts 4: 13. ³Matt. 8: 20. ⁴Matt. 27: 4.

deceived in the works wrought by Christ and his apostles. Surely, it would have been an easy matter, and, at the same time, a creditable act, for such persons to have exposed the fraud, if any fraud obtained, in the marvelous works performed. But the records of the age do not furnish a confession from any one who turned away from his Lord that he had been deceived. Surely, those who embraced Christianity were made acquainted with its secrets, and if there were any fallacies, they knew them, and could have exposed them. This they did not do. In the presence of all the accusations that were charged against Jesus, and having listened to the testimony, and after a personal examination of the accused, Pilate said, "I find no fault in him," and even went so far as to wash his hands and aver, "I am innocent of this man's blood."

7. Now a word or two more about the real character of the miracles themselves. It will be readily admitted that they were either true or false. If they were false, as stated elsewhere, the persons who performed them knew it, and could not have been good men, but deceivers, for it is not supposable that by some strange infatuation they were self-deceived. It is not conceivable that a sane man can so deceive himself and the entire community as to believe that he has raised a dead man to life, that they are dining with him at the table, for in such a miracle, be it remembered, on the assumption that it is a self-deception, three classes must be deceived: first, the miracle performers; second, the person upon whom the miracle is wrought; and, third, the

**The
Character
of the
Miracles
Made
Deception
Impossible.**

eye-witnesses. It is not conceivable that such a species of deception could have obtained through a long period of years, and the deception remain a secret for more than eighteen centuries, and the fraud never either detected or exposed. Surely, the miracles of the Scriptures, neither in their history nor in their character, accord with the idea that their agents were imposters and were of impure motives. Most truthfully says an able apologist, "But most singularly, contrary to all experience and all law, on the assumption that the miracles of Christ and his apostles were fictitious, you discover nothing in them but what is entirely worthy of the majesty, holiness, justice, and goodness of the God by whose power they professed to be wrought." Is it possible for man to conceive of works more in accord with the dignity, the holiness, and the sacred office of the Saviour of men and his apostles, and better qualified to endorse their high claims than the gospel miracles? These men, although betrayed, imprisoned, mocked, spat upon, and put to death, all save perhaps one, yet sustained a dignity, serenity, and grace, and led a life that is the marvel of the ages. Such a life is not the life of a deceiver nor of one who was self-deceived. But if they were either deceivers or deceived, their life, then, is out of accord with laws of nature and the miracle of the ages. Says Origen, the most learned of the church fathers of his day, who wrote a criticism on the works of Celsus: "Undoubtedly we do think him to be the Christ and the Son of God, because he healed the lame and the blind; and we are more confirmed in this persuasion by what is

written in the prophecies, "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall hear, and the lame man shall leap as an hart." But that he also raised the dead; and that it is not a fiction of those who wrote the Gospels is evident from hence, that, if it had been a fiction, there would have been many recorded to be raised, and such as had been a long time in their graves. But it not being a fiction, few have been recorded; for instance, the daughter of the ruler of a synagogue, of whom I do not know why it was said, 'She is not dead, but sleepeth,' expressing something peculiar to her, not common to all dead persons: and the only son of a widow, on whom he had compassion, and raised him to life after he bid the bearers of the corpse to stop; and the third, Lazarus, who had been buried four days." This is a most wonderful testimony, and I know of no appeal more explicit, more positive, and more direct to the Christian miracles than the words just quoted from the eminent father.

8. But the gospel miracles were not false, their enemies being the witnesses to their truth. Is it not remarkable that the Hebrew nation admitted their genuineness? All admit the Jew's dislike, yea, his bitter hatred of Jesus and his apostles; also, his strong love in favor of his own religious institution. Yet not one denial of the reality of any of the miracles of the Gospels is recorded by him, and this amounts to a silent admission of their genuineness. But it is a fact, that the whole Hebrew family was astounded and speechless in the presence of the wonders wrought by him and his disciples, who was to be the light of Israel. Is it also

**Christ's
Enemies
Admitted
that He
Performed
Miracles.**

not a singular fact that no one, either Jew or Gentile, ever detected, or was supposed or professed or was reported to have professed to have detected any imposture or fraud in the gospel miracles? On this feature of that age history is utterly mute, from which but one inference can be drawn, namely, that the recorded miracles of the gospel were at that time, both by friend and foe, recognized as facts. Now, these miracles were "not wrought in a corner," as Paul states, but wherever Jesus and his disciples went these miracles were professed to have been wrought. Had it been untrue, the literature of that age, both Jewish and pagan, would have been crowded with statements of the fraud. But not one line of that kind was written; but, on the contrary, they were admitted to be facts. The Talmud admits their reality, but vainly attempts to explain them as the work of magic. Celsus, a pagan philosopher, who lived about the middle of the second century, and a man of no mean genius, wrote a treatise against the whole scheme of Christianity, in which he admits that Christ wrought miracles, and asserts that he had been in Egypt and learned magic art, by which he wrought miracles, "which engaged great multitudes to adhere to him as the Messiah." Hierocles also admitted the verity of the Christian miracles, as did Julian, the emperor, who says, "Jesus did nothing worthy of fame, unless any one can suppose the curing the lame and the blind and exorcising demons in the villages of Bethsaida are some of the greatest works."¹ The same author admits that Jesus had power over

¹Lardner, Vol. IV., pp. 332-342.

demons, and that he walked on the surface of the sea. According to Saint Jerome, Porphyry, the most learned and critical of the pagan writers against Christianity, acknowledged the verity of these miracles, but accounted for them as the work of magic, as did Celsus. Porphyry recognized that demons were subject to Christ, for he says, "After Jesus was worshiped, Esculapius and the other gods did no more converse with men." Quadratus, a pagan philosopher who became a Christian, says, "Those whom our Saviour raised and healed were not only seen while he himself was upon earth, but survived his departure out of the world; nay, some of them were living in our day."¹

Hence, not the friends of Christianity only, but also its enemies bore witness to the gospel miracles. And while attempts were made by many to account for them by magic, yet their reality was denied by none.

9. Now there is one more fact that must be noted in this connection. During the time that Christ and his apostles were performing their miracles, yes, during the first century, many who at first were persecutors of the Christians afterwards became converts to the faith they had sought to destroy. And the chief factor which led up to their conversion was their positive knowledge and belief of the verity of the miracles recorded in the gospel. Among the converts were Jews, Greeks, and Romans. Each had his own peculiar religion, which was the religion of his fathers, and all the bias peculiar to ancestral customs and institutions gathered about him. All history, both sacred and profane,

**Persecutors
of
Christians
Become
Converts.**

¹ Euseb. Hist. 1-4, c. 3.

that belongs to that age, is full of the scorn, odium, and hatred that attached to Christianity in that day. The historian seems not to weary of telling of the cruel mockings, the scourgings, and the bitter torture and death to which the Christians of the first century were subject. But in the face of all these obstacles, these men who themselves had been persecutors, broke away from the established institutions of their fathers and embraced the faith which they had despised. They knew before they did this the ridicule to which they would expose themselves and the odium that would attach to such a course. In this they were not deceived, but, possessed of a conviction that these teachers were sent from God, and that their mighty works were Heaven's seal of approval upon their claims, they embraced the Christian faith and became its martyrs. Had there been but one persecutor who afterwards embraced Christianity, it, perhaps, would be no marvel; but there were not only scores and hundreds who did so, but many ten thousands did the same thing. Had these converts been predisposed to favor Christianity, their testimony might not be of much weight in the case, but having been enemies,—persecutors,—their testimony is ponderous, yes, overwhelming.

It is generally conceded that men before acting are always prompted by some motive. But in the case of these men, what motive could have prompted them to abandon their persecution and embrace Christianity, and thus take the place of the persecuted? It surely was not personal earthly gain. It could not have been worldly honor. It could not have been worldly power.

**The Motive
in
Embracing
Christianity
was
Conviction
of the
Truth.**

The Author of Christianity promised nothing of this kind to his followers. He told them, on the other hand, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." "Ye shall persecute [them] from city to city."¹ "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake."² The conditions to which the Christians of that age were subjected are most vividly set forth in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and in the same epistle the reasons are assigned why they underwent such conditions for the cause of Christianity. "And others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword: they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, evil entreated (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and the holes of the earth."³ Is it reasonable that men would embrace a faith and espouse a cause which were leading to such issues when they knew that they were grounded on error? Such a course is altogether out of accord with human nature. The true motive which prompted these men to change their course in life and in religion is definitely set forth by Saul of Tarsus, who was one of them, in the defense before Agrippa, the king. The fact of the resurrection, and the marvelous manifestation from heaven which appeared unto him and his company while on their mission of persecution to Damascus was overwhelmingly convincing to him of the verity of Christ's mission and of the whole scheme of Christianity. The lives

¹ John 16:33. ² Matt. 23:34. ³ Mark 13:13; John 10:33. * Heb. 11:36-38.

led by these witnesses are an illustration of the truth of the testimony which they give as the reason for their change in their religious life. Indeed, if such witnesses are not to be believed, where are we to seek for testimony in proof of the truth of any case that comes under the senses?

Recapitulation.

Now to recapitulate the arguments adduced in this chapter:

1. The age in which Christ and his apostles lived and wrought their miracles was one of great intellectual enlightenment and learning. The civilization, literature, philosophy, and art of the ancient world culminated in that age, and the human mind was never better prepared to test the truth of miracles than at that time.

2. The miracles performed were at once open to the inspection of the senses, and their truth could be, and was tested by the witnesses, and the witnesses were from all classes and conditions of men.

3. The Scripture miracles extend over a period from fifteen hundred to two thousand years. The New Testament miracles, over a period of almost one hundred years, or, at least, up to the death of the "beloved disciple." The miracles thus wrought were always recognized as genuine, and were not limited to any special locality.

4. Neither Christ nor any one of his disciples ever failed in his attempt to perform a miracle, except as stated on page 85. The cures effected were always instantaneous, regardless of the nature of the disease.

5. These miracles were not only subject to the

scrutiny of the eye-witnesses, but they have been open to the inspection and criticism of every generation that has lived since that day. And, too, they, having been performed in the interest of a new religion, attracted special attention, and must have aroused great opposition and elicited the most rigid scrutiny. Also, their publication at the very time they were performed, and being appealed to as a special proof of the performer's divine commission, afforded ample opportunity to detect and expose fraud. But they were admitted to be facts.

6. That Christ and his apostles were not learned men is an admitted fact, yet on the supposition that their miracles were frauds and that Christianity is a deception, they, by their fraud, have lifted empires from off their hinges, turned the currents of the centuries from their deep-worn channels, and revolutionized the religious thought of the ages. Of all who embraced Christianity in that day, notwithstanding the persecutions and intimidations, not one confessed that he had been deceived by the miracles of his Lord, but even averred that what they had seen and heard were matters of fact.

7. The miracles recorded in the Scriptures were either true or false. If they were false, the men who performed them must have been bad men, or they were self-deceived. The life of suffering they lived and the death they died disprove the assumption that they were bad men. On the theory that they were self-deceived, in each case three classes must have been deceived: first, the miracle worker; second, the recipient of the miracle; and, third, the eye-witnesses; that is, Jesus was deceived

when he is said to have raised Lazarus from the dead; second, Lazarus was deceived when he was said to be dead and raised to life; and, third, all the eye-witnesses were deceived when they thought Lazarus was dead and supposed Jesus raised him to life again. This is not reasonable. Christ and his disciples did not live and act the part of self-deceived men. More than eighteen centuries lie between their day and ours, yet no deception, no fraud, has ever been detected in the gospel miracles.

8. But the enemies of Christianity attest the truth of the gospel miracles, also. Not one recorded case from that age comes to us where an enemy of the Christian faith denied the reality of the recorded miracles of Christ and his apostles. But, on the other hand, both Jew and pagan admitted their reality, but attributed them to the work of demons.

9. But this must not be overlooked in this connection, namely, that many who at first were persecutors of the Christians broke away from their persecution and embraced Christianity, and died martyrs to the faith. These converts professed to have been convinced of the truth of Christianity by the miracles wrought by Christ and his disciples and the worthy lives they lived. Surely, their attitude to the Christian faith in all their after life, as contrasted with their life prior to their conversion, renders them very worthy witnesses.

CHAPTER VI.

FACTS ADMITTED IN CHRISTIANITY.

AS THE world looks backward, it sees many important milestones set up, marking the route over which the family of mankind has traveled. Some of these stones mark definite epochs in human history. Christianity is one of these. There is no fact in history better authenticated and more completely buttressed about with admitted proofs than are the facts connected with the advent of Jesus of Nazareth and his authorship of Christianity. That Jesus was born in Bethlehem, in Judea, during the reign of Augustus Cæsar; that he chose twelve men as his disciples whom he trained for the preaching of the gospel; that neither he nor they were learned men; that he taught not longer than three years, from place to place in Palestine; that one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot by name, betrayed him, and that he was condemned by the Jewish Sanhedrim, and put to death by crucifixion under the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, while Pontius Pilate was the Roman procurator at Jerusalem,—all are facts admitted by the well informed. Tacitus, who wrote about thirty years after Christ's ascension, says, speaking of the Christians, "They had their denomination from *Christus*, who, in the reign of Tiberius, was put to death as a criminal by the procurator, Pontius Pilate."¹ That John the

**Some Facts
Admitted
by All.**

¹ Tacitus, *Annals*, 15, Chap. 44.

Baptist, whose preaching preceded that of Christ, and about whom much is said in the Gospels, was put to death by Herod, the king, is verified by Josephus, the Jew, in the following statement, "Now, some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, that was called the Baptist; for Herod slew him,"¹

**Influence on
Paganism.**

In a brief period after the death of Jesus, his religion had made a profound impression, not only upon the mind of the Jew, whose religion was a pure monotheism, but the pagan mind, also, was being powerfully influenced by what he had taught. That he had taught, while living, that he was sent of God to establish a divine, everlasting, universal kingdom, of which he, the "promised Messiah," was to be the head, was a fact well understood. Not longer than three days after his death, his disciples and the two Marys witnessed that he had risen from the dead, and appeared to them in accord with the promise he had made to them before his death. This alleged resurrection of their Master they published, and proclaimed it abroad, for which they were subjected to the most bitter persecution, cruel torture, and death. Suetonius says, "The Christians were severely punished."² Pliny the Younger, says, speaking of the spread of Christianity and the persecution of the Christians, "*Multi omnis aetatis, omnis ordinis, utrusque sexus etiam vocantur in periculum*" ("Many of every rank, and of both sexes, were brought into peril").³ The same author was magistrate in Pontus

¹ Antiq. 18, 5-2. ² Suet, Nero, Claud. Cæs., Chap. 16.

³ Plin. Epist., 97, lib. 10.

and Bithynia in 111 A. D., and in his report to the Emperor Trajan, says, "*Soliti essent convenere, carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicere*" ("They were accustomed to assemble, and to sing a hymn to Christ as to God"). "The contagion of this superstition," he continues, "had spread, not into the cities merely, but also into villages and into fields. The temples were desolate. The most sacred rites for some time were suspended. And scarcely any one was found to purchase victims for them."¹ Tacitus, who wrote in 64 A. D., speaking of the persecution of Christians by Nero, says: "This pernicious superstition, thus checked for a while, broke out again, and spread not only over Judea, where the evil originated, but through Rome, also, whither everything bad upon earth finds its way, and is practiced. Some who confessed their sect were first seized, and afterwards by their information, vast multitudes were apprehended, who were convicted not so much of the crime of burning Rome as of hatred to mankind. Their sufferings at their execution were aggravated by insult and mockery; for some were disguised in skins of wild beasts, and worried to death by dogs; some were crucified, and others were wrapt in pitch shirts and set on fire when the day closed, that they might serve as lights to illuminate the night." This author states that Nero "lent his own gardens for these executions," and took part himself in the circensian entertainment, which he instituted for the occasion, "clad in the dress of a charioteer."² These citations show not only who was the author of Christianity, but also the country in

¹ Pliny, Epistle 97, liber 10. ² Tacitus, Annals, lib. 15, Chap. 44.

which he lived and established the church, as well as its rapid development among the nations. But in spite of all forms of persecution, legal enactments, and threatenings, the religion of the cross moved on and out among the nations. In less than two years from the death of its Founder, it had overrun Judea, and by the close of the first century it had spread over Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia, Lybia, Egypt, Arabia, Armenia, Parthia, and the whole of Asia Minor, and was preached in no small part of Europe.

Christianity Changes the Religion of the Roman Empire.

When Jesus and the resurrection was first preached in Rome, the empire was pagan, and her temples were all dedicated to heathen gods. In 313 A. D., Constantine, then emperor of Rome, became a convert to Christianity and proclaimed the empire Christian. But even before his day, Arnobius tells us that "the whole world was filled with Christ's doctrine." He also speaks of the "diffusion throughout all countries, of an innumerable body of Christians in distant provinces, of strange revolutions of opinion of men of great genius; orators, grammarians, rhetoricians, physicians, lawyers, having come over to the institution, and that also in the face of threats, execution, and tortures." The old religions which obtained in those countries where and when Christianity came, have been displaced, and now in the closing decade of the nineteenth century Jupiter is without a worshiper, and has not a temple on the face of the whole earth.

The Beginning of Christianity and the Opposition to its Founders.

No fact in history is more obvious than that at the time of the advent the religions of the world were two—Jewish and pagan. Both of these were hostile to

Christianity. It not only had to make its way against religious prejudice, but against the intellect and learning, both of Jews and pagans. Christianity threw itself at once across the pathway of both these religions, and with an open, avowed purpose of destroying them and overturning their most sacred and ancient institutions. To accomplish this, Christians organized themselves into societies, which they called the church, and under this form of organization a most marvelous development has obtained. Different forms of church polity have been established,—the rites of baptism and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and the change of the Jewish Sabbath to Sunday and its observance, all have been in practice since the days of the apostles.

At different periods great church councils have been called to settle disputed theological doctrines, and learned creeds have been formulated and adopted, which to-day are in force among the churches. On the great problems of the church and her religious institutions so much has been written that the modern world is almost flooded with the literature of religious thought, to a degree that it pervades, directly or indirectly, all modern philosophy, poetry, science of government, history, and art. While these contributions have come largely from the pen of the Christian scholar, yet the power of Christianity has been so forceful as to often influence the pen, not only of the non-Christian author favorably on religious lines, but even the pen of the skeptic as well, for Strauss, Renan, and Ingersoll have said many things good of Jesus.

No reasonable man questions but that our modern

**Church
Councils
and Their
Influence.**

**Influence of
Christianity on
Civilization.**

civilization has been marvelously affected by Christianity. Not only its literature, but its laws and its institutions have, in a sense, been molded by the Christ spirit. This could not well be otherwise, for the kings and the queens and the presidents of our Christian civilization are Christians, at least in name, while many of them are Christians in fact. While it is true that in the name of religion many wicked and atrocious deeds have been done, yet every right-minded person knows they were perpetrated in violation of the plain letter and spirit of the Holy Scriptures. Aye, and the authors themselves of such wicked deeds were well aware that their acts were wholly out of accord with the teachings of Christ and his apostles.

**Christianity
Claims
to be Divine
and Appeals
to Miracles
as Proof.**

Again, we repeat what we have at least impliedly stated elsewhere, that it is an acknowledged historical fact that Christianity offered itself to the world, and was pushed into history, and demanded that it be heard and received upon the pretense of miracles publicly wrought as an evidence to all peoples where the gospel should be preached, of its divine authority; and that it was actually received by multitudes in the age and the identical localities where its miracles were wrought, upon the professed belief of the reality of those miracles. In this, including the Jew's religion and their Scriptures, Christianity is distinguished from all other religions. For, surely, no well informed person will claim that Mohammedanism or any other religion, except the religion of the Holy Scriptures, was received upon the fact of supposed miracles publicly wrought, as the miracles of the Scriptures are reported to have

been. Now, it is a known fact that multitudes of Jews and of pagans in different parts of the world where the apostles preached and wrought miracles, forsook the religions of their fathers and embraced Christianity, and thus separated themselves from their friends and exposed themselves not only to many inconveniences, but to indignities, as well as, in a word, gave up the world, for that was the condition of discipleship. I ask, is it, therefore, reasonable that they would have done all this had they not positive knowledge of the truth of those miracles upon a knowledge or belief of which they professed to do it? Surely, the first converts to Christianity must have believed them; that is, their acceptance of Christianity was an open declaration of their knowledge or belief in the reality of those miracles. And as Bishop Butler has said: "And this their testimony is the same kind of evidence for those miracles as if they had put it in writing and these writings had come down to us. It is real evidence, because it is of facts which they had capacity and full opportunity to inform themselves of." For were a fact expressly related by one or more ancient historians, and disputed in after ages, that this fact is acknowledged to have been believed by great numbers of the age in which the historian says it was done, would be allowed as an additional proof of such fact, quite distinct from the express testimony of the historian. The credulity of mankind is acknowledged, and the suspicion of mankind ought to be acknowledged, too; and their backwardness even to believe, and, greater still, to practice what makes against their interest. And it must particularly be remem-

bered that education and prejudice and authority were against Christianity in the age I am speaking of. So that the immediate conversion of such numbers is a real presumption of something more than human in this matter. Now, it is the combination of these admitted facts of primitive Christianity that makes its accumulative evidences so complete and overwhelming. It is fact, not fancy, that the true apologist has always presented, and it is her truths that the opponents of Christianity have had to combat, and have vainly attempted to set aside. And, moreover, it is her facts which exhibit how grand a phenomenon Christianity is in the history of the world, and, therefore, the duty of the apologist is to make manifest that the Holy Scriptures give a true account of its origin, for on its truth, not on fiction, on a knowledge of facts, not on human credulity, it must ever stand or fall.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CHRIST—A SELF-REVELATION OF GOD TO MAN.

1. CHRISTIANITY alone presents the only ideal character to the world. It finds this personality in its own author, Jesus, the Nazarene. This Jesus is not a mythical, but a real character, whose nationality and country are well known, and whose birth, life, and death created a new era in the world's history. He is the historic Christ, whose character is not made up of negative virtue alone, devoid of culpable traits, but a character which, through the vicissitudes of the centuries, has inspired the lives of men with a religion of love that is adapted to all men of every age, temperament, and condition, a character which is not only the true type of virtue, but inspires the strongest incentive to practice it, and has exercised an influence so profound upon the world "that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and exhortations of moralists of all ages." Now, how is this character to be explained on the principles of human nature? In the Author of Christianity this peculiarity at once is manifest, that, while all other men, at least in a degree, are formed by the spirit of the age and their environments, in the Christ there is no impression or touch whatever, either of the age in which he lived

**Jesus the
Only
Perfect Life
the World
Has Ever
Seen.**

or his environment, but he seems to have been absolutely over all and above all.

**Jesus is
Cosmopoli-
tan in his
Character.**

The state of society and the tastes and customs of the people of his day are well known, as are also the expectations and hopes of his countrymen; yet, had he been brought up and lived in another world, he could not have been more free and untouched by, or exalted above them. In character, he is absolutely cosmopolitan, having nothing temporary or local in it. He stands out among the sons of men like an oasis in a desert, and from the day he was "lifted up," as the centuries have swept by, his fame has steadily increased, and the nations of earth have been so touched by his "drawing" power that now he is the most prominent figure and best known of all earth's children. Among the learned and the illiterate, his history and character are more studied than the history and character of any one member of our race, and more lives have been written of Jesus than of any other man. These lives have been written alike by Christians, skeptics, and Jews. Out of his teachings have come more of joy and comfort to the high and the low, the sick and the sorrowing of earth's children than from all that sages have dreamed and poets sung. He has overturned empires, thrown down the temples of Jupiter, robbed him of his worshipers, and consigned him to the oblivion of the past.

**Christ's
Life on
Earth was
Solitary.**

We find in Jesus nothing of the spirit of the age in which he lived. His apostles brought that spirit to him, and its strength is made manifest in the slowness with which it submitted, in these men, to the teachings of their Master. Indeed, he was a solitary being, whom

none understood, living for purposes comprehended only by himself, without the sympathy or support of a single mind. The expectation of the advent of the Messiah was at its zenith among his people, and he claimed to be that person. But he threw himself across the pathway of the current opinions of his countrymen on that subject and resisted them without reserve. A temporal king and a temporal kingdom was the Jew's highest expectation—a leader that would marshal Israel and take vengeance upon her foes, and establish the throne of David forever in Jerusalem. But he declared himself a messenger of peace,¹ a teacher of righteousness,² the Saviour of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews,³ and that his kingdom was not of this world, but spiritual.⁴ Thus his conception of the kingdom of God and of the Messiah's reign was an offense to his people. Nor did he attempt in any way to disguise his purpose or soften his opposition to their dream of ages, their most cherished hopes, and thus conciliate prejudice and mollify the effrontery of change from long established religious beliefs and customs; but, on the other hand, he showed his utter disdain for such methods, the resort of ambition and imposture.

But with a seeming consciousness of the truth of his cause, the Founder of Christianity adopted methods to accomplish his high mission—methods which would at once secure his hatred and rejection, which are out of accord with the principles of our common human nature, and which exonerate him from the possibility of

¹ John 14:27; 16:3. ² Matt. 5:6. ³ Matt. 12:21. ⁴ John 18:36.

having been prompted by selfish aims or inspired by either ambition or imposture.

2. Now, let us note some of the personal characteristics of the Christ. The period in which he lived is well known to have been remarkably narrow and bigoted, and his own nation particularly selfish. But Jesus was in nothing more marked than in the vastness of his conceptions. Not the salvation of one nation, but to save a world, was his mission; and yet so boundless and compassionate was he that not even a sparrow falls to the ground that does not receive his Father's notice.¹ All that was vital in ancient Judaism he developed from the creed of a tribe into the religion of a world. All about him was the narrow expectation of the Jew that Messiah would deliver God's ancient people at the sacrifice of the rest of mankind; but, contrary to this expectation, he declared himself to be the deliverer and light of the whole world, and, whether at the cross beneath or at the throne above, that consciousness never forsook him. The conception of one religion for all peoples was his own, and a thing unthought of by either Jew or pagan. Said Celsus, "The man who can believe it possible for Greeks and barbarians, in Asia, Europe, Libya, to agree in one code of religious laws must be utterly void of sense."² The world's sages had never conceived of the possibility of a universal faith; it was above the philosopher's dream, and beyond the ambition of the conqueror's most extravagant imaginations.

Now, these vast conceptions of Jesus—one religion

**Personal
Character-
istics of the
Christ.**

**His Ideas
Were
Different
From All
Other Men.**

¹ Matt. 10: 29. ² Geikie, *Life and Works of Jesus*, p. 10.

for all peoples, the annihilation of all caste, a universal kingdom of righteousness and peace established on the law of love—cannot be reconciled on the principle of his environment. He was a Jew, and the law of environment would be that he would think as a Jew and act as a Jew, but he did not. The first, last, and all-the-time thought of the Jew was, the superiority conferred on him and his people by the religion of Moses and their descent from Abraham. He never tired of saying, "We have Abraham to our father."¹ The thought of the Hebrew mind of the age is expressed in the second Book of Esdras, thus: "On our account thou hast created the world. Other nations sprung from Adam, thou hast said, are nothing, and are like spittle, and thou hast likened their multitude to the droppings from a cask. But *we* are thy people, whom thou hast called thy first-born, thine only begotten, thy well-beloved."² Also, in the Book of Sifri we read, "A single Israelite is of more worth in the sight of God than all the nations of the world; every Israelite is of more value before him than all the nations who have been or will be." But Jesus, in direct opposition, declared the universal brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God. Of this the world had never before heard, and was in no sense prepared to receive it. It was not only an offense to the Hebrew, but to the Greek and the barbarian as well. While the world about him was a bundle of selfishness, the unique charm of his character was a life of absolute unselfishness. This life of self-denial he incorporated into his religion, and made it the test of all healthy religious

**Jesus
Revealed
the
Brother-
hood of Man
and the
Fatherhood
of God.**

¹ Matt. 3: 9. ² (6: 55).

life. By this supreme standard of religion he rebuked the asceticism of John in the solitudes of the wilderness and the religious austerities of the hermit in his cell. The church and the world alike had fenced off, as something distinct from common duties of life, the domain of religion, but he pulled down the high wall and sanctified the whole sweep of existence. He carried religion into the haunts and homes of both public and private life, and declared it to be "more blessed to give than to receive." Active benevolence, labors to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, the recognition of every man as brother, sharing alike their joys and sorrows, dignifying every sphere of human activity, no difference how humble, how low, were his to do and teach, all subordinated by a single aim, to the Father's glory. Now, how can these views—exalted views and vast conceptions of Christ—be reconciled with his humble station in life, his general environment? He was the reputed son of a carpenter, of humble education as well as birth, without means, without influence, only a carpenter. Judging from his environment, his knowledge of the world could not have been so very extensive; his experience had not been such as to have given him vast conceptions of a world empire, much less the idea of a spiritual, universal kingdom and the means to employ for its establishment. All his life training and the circumstances which ever surrounded him were just the opposite of this. Had he been a trained soldier under Roman discipline, and had he taken part as such in Rome's conquest of the world, such circumstances might have excited his ambition and broadened his views; but, I

**How
Account
for the
Character
of Jesus.**

tell you, the carpenter shop is not a place to create a conception of world empire, nor a life training among a class of pessimistic or religiously intolerant Jews calculated to inspire a thought of the universal brotherhood of man; neither did living under Roman domination tend to infuse into the heart the spirit, "Love your enemies." But under circumstances the most adverse to forming a character such as Jesus possessed, he lived and was trained. How can we account for this enigma, the exception in human history?

3. What always strikes me most in the life and teachings of Jesus is, the cool, calm confidence he had in himself and the ultimate success of the cause which he represented. Says Dr. Channing, "Another striking circumstance in Jesus is the calm confidence with which he always looked forward to the accomplishment of his designs." He fully knew the strength of the passions and powers which were arrayed against him, and was perfectly aware that his life was to be shortened by violence, yet not a word escaped him implying a doubt of the ultimate triumph of his religion. One of the beauties of the Gospels and one of the proofs of their genuineness is found in our Saviour's indirect and obscure allusions to his approaching sufferings and to the glory which was to follow—allusions showing us the workings of a mind thoroughly conscious of being appointed to accomplish infinite good through great calamity. This entire and patient relinquishment of immediate success, this ever-present persuasion that he was to perish before his religion would advance, and this calm, unshaken anticipation of distant triumph, are remarkable

**The
Confidence
of Jesus in
Himself
and in His
Cause.**

traits, throwing a tender, solemn grandeur over our Lord, and wholly inexplicable by human principles or by the circumstances in which he was placed."¹ "For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."² He claimed to be a messenger sent from the other side and to know all about that "unknown country." He was the first of all earth's children to set up such a claim. Moses and the prophets, among the Hebrews, Confucius, Buddha, and Zoroaster among the pagans, made no such high pretensions. He also set up the standard of infallibility for himself. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."³ In this he was unlike other teachers. He seldom used argument, but, as a rule, stated facts and usually laid bare to the understanding of the thoughtful final causes or results. He who goes to Jesus for instruction will be disappointed if he expects to find an exhaustive digest on art, science, or philosophy. This was not his mission. As one has said, "His sphere in religion, the character of God, the principles of the spiritual life, the forgiveness of sins, the discipline of the soul, the life to come." On all these themes he has said the last word, and swept clear the mist-enshrouded coast of ontology, touched the most lofty arch of truth, and made plain the soul's way to God. He only of all earth's teachers has laid down the infallible rule on which man can think rightly on religion, a future life, immortality, and how to come to God. The Christ never even hinted that his gospel, his teaching, should be questioned or be a subject of argu-

¹ Channing's Works, p. 228. ² John 6: 38. ³ Matt. 24: 35.

ment. It was to be believed, received, and obeyed by all who would be blessed by it. It was a series of declamations set in the most forceful and winning manner. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."¹ "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God."² Such language is not found on the lips of any other of the world's great teachers. It is peculiar to the man of Calvary, and, coming from his pure lips, it falls on the human ear like the cadence of a sweet song at the close of a bright summer day. On all great questions touching religion, God, and a future life, the world's sages have always spoken with great modesty and caution, aye, often with doubt. "Yes, Plato, thou reasonest well," said old Cato. But even with Plato it was only a matter of opinion, but with Jesus, opinion has developed into personal, conscious knowledge. "I am the living bread which came down out of heaven."

Unlike all other men, the Christ made no mistakes. His life and his sayings have been before the world for almost nineteen centuries. They have been subjected to the scrutiny and criticism alike of friend and foe, and their verdict accords with the verdict of Pilate, "I find no fault in him." He always said the right thing at the right time, and in the right way, and to the best possible advantage. He never did a wrong act; it was always done at the right time, and in the right way to meet the conditions which prompted the action. There is no evidence that he ever corrected his statement, re-considered his plan, or changed his acts. He was the

**Christ Made
No Mistake.**

¹ John 6: 35, 51. ² John 7: 17. ³ John 6: 47.

faultless man among men, a marvel in the world's history. He stood out a mighty Pharos in the great sea of humanity, unequalled and unapproached and unapproachable by any of the sons of men. In him the race finds the perfect man, perfect in life, perfect in knowledge, aye, perfect in character—a perfect completion, and utterly unaccounted for by the natural principles of our common humanity. Imperfection is one of the marked features of the world's greatest of men. Jesus is the only exception to this. All men have not been equally defective. Moses had fewer defects than the wise king of Israel, and he illustrated this in his remarkably eventful life. David was better than Saul, Socrates than Philip of Macedon, and Cicero than Nero, and the lives they lived are the illustrations of the fact. While the world's teachers, as a rule, in point of theory were good, their lives never measured up to what they taught. This same sad fact is only too true at the present. In this respect, history has repeated itself with every generation of our sorrow-smitten race. To teach the truth is one thing, but to illustrate what the teacher has taught in his own well-regulated life is quite a different thing.

This Jesus did, so that it makes him a marked man, an exception to all men. He walked through the world in this respect a moral giant among men. The allurements of society and the temptations of demons had no effect upon him, and, like a Colossus, he stood among men, "the holiest among the mighty, and the mightiest among the holy." Spinoza calls him "the symbol of divine wisdom," Hegel, "the union of divine and hu-

man," and Dr. Channing says, "The character of Jesus is wholly inexplicable on human principles," and the Word of God calls him "King of kings and Lord of lords." Said De Wette, the most learned and intellectual of all the German critics, "This only I know, that there is salvation in no other name than in the name of Jesus Christ, the crucified, and that nothing loftier offers itself to humanity than the God manhood realized in him, and the kingdom of God which he founded—an idea and problem not yet rightly understood and incorporated into the life, even of those who in other respects rank as the most zealous and warmest Christians." At his teachings, paganism is gradually melting away, and uncivilized tribes are becoming nations under Christian governments. By his magic touch whatever was vital in ancient Judaism was expanded from the mere creed of a tribe into a religion for the whole world. He opened up the secrets of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and taught the world to use and appreciate the terms "my Father" and "your Father." "From first to last Jesus is the same, always the same, majestic and simple, infinitely severe and infinitely gentle. Throughout a life passed under the public eye he never gave occasion to find fault. The prudence of his conduct compels our admiration by its union of force and gentleness. Alike in speech and action, he is enlightened, consistent, and calm. Sublimity is said to be an attribute of divinity. What name, then, shall we give him in whose character were united every element of the sublime?" "He is a mystery indeed to our intellectual and philosophical

comprehension, but a mystery made manifest as the most glorious fact in history—the blessed mystery of godliness, the inexhaustible theme of meditation and praise for all generations.” He is the self-revelation of God to man.

CHAPTER VIII.

PROPHECY—A PROOF OF CHRISTIANITY.

THE evidences of Christianity are, in their nature and tendencies, accumulative. It is the culmination of their accumulated evidences, from miracles, from admitted facts in the Christian system, from the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ, from the marvelous propagation of primitive Christianity, and from prophecy, and from other sources which bring the honest doubters about to a conviction of truth in revealed religion. Prophecy is pre-history, and relates wholly to future events. It is the historian recording the fate of a city or of a nation or of an individual, accurately, before that fate is accomplished. To do this requires a miracle of knowledge, knowledge such as is not possessed by man in his normal condition, and comes only from God. "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost."¹ David Hume said, "All prophecies are real miracles, and as such only can be admitted as proofs of any revelation."² It is the fulfillment which makes manifest the miracle in a prophecy, not the mere prediction that such an event will come to pass. But when the event comes to pass, as predicted, then God shows his hand in the prophecy, and the miracle of knowledge

**Prophecy
Defined.**

¹ II. Peter 1: 21. * Phil. Essays.

**Proof of
Prophecy.**

becomes the highest proof of a revelation. By way of illustration: If George Washington, in the last year of his life, had predicted that in 1898 an American warship would be blown up in Havana Harbor, and that the same year a war would ensue between the United States and Spain, and that one Admiral Dewey would have command of the American warships in the Pacific, and that he would go to the Philippine Islands, under orders, and there, in Manila Harbor, meet the Spanish fleet and destroy or capture every vessel; and if he had claimed that God had thus revealed to him the facts stated, and told him to write them in a book, the simple prediction in itself would contain no evidence that God had spoken to George Washington, but the facts which have transpired in 1898 between the United States and Spain, being a literal fulfillment of the supposed prediction, would be a proof that his claim to inspiration is vindicated and that God had thus spoken to him. Now, on this wise are the predictions, both in the Old and the New Testament. The men who wrote the predictions contained in the Scriptures claimed that God had commanded them to write, and thus they wrote and pushed their predictions into history; and, in a manner, too, that they have been before the world and have been read and studied from eighteen to three thousand years. No reasonable man will claim that ample time and opportunity have not been given to men of the world to investigate and test by legitimate methods the truth or the falsity of the claims set up by the prophets. There is little uniformity in the manner in which they claim to have been impressed or commissioned to report their

heavenly messages. Seldom are any two of them inspired in the same way, and seldom, also, any one of them twice in the same or in like former manner. Sometimes in a vision or dream the revelation was given; sometimes the voice of God or the voice of his angel was heard by the prophet. At other times God took complete possession of the prophet and used him as his mouthpiece. The books of prophecy in the Old Testament closed three hundred and ninety-seven years before Christ, and in the New Testament more than eighteen hundred years ago. Standing on the vantage ground of the opening year of the twentieth century, it is the privilege of the investigator to scan in the light of history the centuries which lie between him and the age in which the prophets lived and wrote their predictions, and compare the history of these centuries with the prophecies and see if there is, or has been a veritable fulfillment of them. The vast amount of historic evidence acquired, within the past few years, from the monuments and the libraries exhumed from buried cities, right on the sites where the prophets lived and wrote their messages, settles beyond a reasonable doubt, not only the dates of the prophecies, but also the peoples and the cities against which the predictions were uttered.

1. The flash-lights from the excavations now going on in the valleys of the Euphrates and the Tigris make old Nineveh and Babylon new old cities. From these valleys Abraham, the founder of the Hebrew family-nation, was called, and from their peoples and cities God has never withdrawn his scourge of "perpetual desolation." Against Nineveh two of his prophets, Nahum

**Prophetic
Inspiration.**

**Fulfillment
of Prophecy
Regarding
Nineveh
and
Babylon.**

and Zephaniah, uttered their predictions, and Jonah tells us of its vast population and their great wickedness. Said Zephaniah, six hundred and thirty or more years before Christ, "And he will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like the wilderness."¹ Said Nahum, "But Nineveh hath been from of old like a pool of water." "Nineveh is laid waste; who will bemoan her?"² These prophets wrote when Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian kingdom and empire, was in her full splendor. Her destruction came 606 B. C., and so complete was it that Nineveh dropped out of history for more than two thousand years. The site, even, of this great city was lost. The later Greek and Roman historians knew nothing of Nineveh. Xenophon marched his "10,000" over it 400 B. C. Alexander the Great made it the camping-ground for his mighty host, but was ignorant that Nineveh slept beneath. The critic began to inquire, Where is the site of lost Nineveh? and the skeptic and doubter responded, "Nowhere; Nineveh is a myth." To-day, the lost and almost forgotten city is exhumed. The palace of the great Sargon, probably the most magnificent ever erected by the hand of man, covering more than twenty-five acres, has been excavated. The great library of Asurbanipal, who was the last of the great kings of Assyria, and a contemporary with Manasseh and Josiah of Judah, with its 30,000 tablets and cylinders, is now before the world, confirming biblical history and throwing light upon that remote age. Thus Babylon, the capital city of the country

¹Zeph. 2: 13. ²Nah. 2: 8; 3: 7.

called Shinar in Genesis, but later Chaldea, stood on the banks of the Euphrates, about 250 miles distant from Nineveh, and was the center of a vast empire. On account of her great wickedness, she, together with her kings, became the subject of many prophecies. Isaiah, 713 B. C., predicted her destruction and perpetual desolation. "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall shepherds make their flocks to lie down there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there," etc.¹ Also, "I will also make it a possession for the porcupine, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts." The glory of this once magnificent city, like that of her sister, Nineveh, has passed away forever. Her decline commenced with the conquest of Cyrus. After the death of Alexander the Great, the seat of empire was transferred to Antioch by the Seleucidæ, which gave the death blow to the prosperity of Babylon, and her perpetual desolation came. For ages the surrounding tribes preyed upon her walls, her temples, and her palaces, until the "beauty of the Chaldeans' excellency" has, as Jeremiah said, literally and most emphatically "become heaps."² Her walls have been "thrown down," "jackals" hide in her palaces, her land is "a wilderness," "owls dwell there." The natives believe that some infernal genii have their abode there,

¹ Isa. 13: 19-22; 14: 23. ² Jer. 51: 37, 44; also, 50: 15.

and for the wealth of the Indies the "Arab would not pitch his tent," neither the shepherd fold his flock where once mighty Babylon stood. For generations it has been uninhabited. He who now walks through the land knows that the predictions of the prophet respecting Nineveh and Babylon are literally fulfilled. The light thrown on this subject by the recent discoveries made on the sites of these two great cities, not only shows how minutely the prophecy respecting them has been, and is now being fulfilled, but also how faithful the sacred historian was in stating the facts respecting these cities, their greatness, the pride of their kings, and the wickedness of their peoples.

**Prophecies
Regarding
Egypt
Fulfilled.**

2. Egypt for ages was a center of the world's civilization and commerce. This fact is just, as it were, beginning to dawn upon the modern world. The statements made and the facts implied by the author of the Pentateuch, as well as by some of the prophets, were laughed out of court by many modern critics; but since the hieroglyphics on Egypt's monuments and the Tel-el-Amarna tablets have spoken, a new era in historical investigation has dawned, and Moses and the prophets have become a new book. This wonder-land, Egypt, became interlinked with Hebrew history, and was a marked land by her prophets. Ezekiel directs his anathemas against this land of the Pharaohs and her cities in a most significant manner. Said he: "I will make the land of Egypt a desolation in the midst of the countries that are desolate, . . . and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries. . . . It shall be the basest

of the kingdoms; neither shall it any more lift itself up above the nations: and I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations." Again, "Thus saith the Lord God: I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause the images to cease from Noph; and there shall be no more a prince out of the land of Egypt. And I will put fear in the land of Egypt. And I will make Pathros desolate, and I will set a fire in Zoan, and I will execute judgments in No. And I will pour my fury upon Sin, the strong hold of Egypt; and I will cut off the multitude of No. And I will set a fire in Egypt; Sin shall be in great anguish, and No shall be broken up: and Noph shall have adversaries in the day-time. The young men of Aven and of Pi-beseth shall fall by the sword: and these cities shall go into captivity. At Tehaphnehes also the day shall withdraw itself, when I shall break there the yokes of Egypt, and the pride of her power shall cease in her: as for her, a cloud shall cover her, and her daughters shall go into captivity. Thus will I execute judgments in Egypt: and they shall know that I am the Lord."¹ These prophecies were written when Egypt's political sky was clear and her national prosperity was promising. Her valleys never were more fertile, nor her citizens better clothed and fed. But the eye of the Babylonian from across the seas was jealous of that prosperity, and with an overwhelming army came Chaldea's greatest monarch and broke into smithers the kingdom of the Pharaohs and carried her peoples into captivity, and "scattered them among the countries." Cambyses performed a like feat,

¹ Ezek. 29: 12-15; 30: 13-19.

dashing her cities, temples, and deities to the ground. Alexander the Great next inflicted a crushing blow upon Egypt, and brushed away her ancient civilization and introduced that of the Greek. So complete has been her ruin that if you eliminate about sixty years from the conquest of Nebuchadnezzar, not one native prince has sat upon the throne of Egypt. The cities named by the prophet are a complete and a perpetual desolation. I have walked amid the ruins of On and Karnak (Thebes), and looked upon the pyramids and sphinxes of Noph (Memphis), and know that the predictions of the prophet respecting them are now fulfilled. But why this desolation? The valley of the Nile has always been equally fertile, and never more so than at the present, and yet her most sacred cities and centers of population have faded to decay, and Egypt is ruled by foreign lords. For more than twenty-three hundred years there has been "no more a prince out of the land of Egypt."

3. Tyre was a great Phœnician city, which stood on an island in the Mediterranean Sea adjacent to the coast line of Phœnicia. In her glory, and in the days of Ezekiel, she was the pride and mistress of the seas. Of her the prophet predicted: "Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I am against thee, O Tyre, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyre, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her a bare rock. She shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; for I have spoken it, saith the Lord

**Prophecies
Regarding
Tyre
Fulfilled.**

God. . . . And I will make thee a bare rock: thou shalt be a place for the spreading of nets; thou shalt be built no more; for I the Lord have spoken it.”¹ After a siege of twelve or thirteen years, the inhabitants in part having passed out over the sea to Carthage and elsewhere, the city fell into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, 573 B. C. This scourge marked the beginning of the decline of Tyre, and steadily her glory faded, until for ages she has been, and now is a place where the fishermen “spread their nets.” On the 19th of February, 1900, I passed the little island. Only a humble, insignificant town now occupies the site where once proud Tyre stood.

4. The history of the Hebrew race for the past nineteen centuries is a standing proof and literal fulfillment of the prediction of Moses respecting that people. He told them of their coming rebellion against the God of their fathers, and then threatened them with the judgment that would ensue: “The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: . . . and thou shalt be tossed to and fro among all the kingdoms of the earth.” “The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from afar, from the end of the earth, as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation of fierce countenance,” etc. The Romans were their conquerors, and are here described. Again, “The Lord shall scatter thee among all peoples, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth. . . . And among these nations . . . shall be no rest for the sole of thy foot: but the Lord shall give

**The History
of the Jews
a Fulfill-
ment of
Prophecy.**

¹ Ezek. 26: 3-5, 14.

thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and pining of soul: and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear night and day, and shalt have none assurance of thy life."¹ This whole chapter is a marvel of prophecy respecting the Jew. With what definiteness the sage of Israel marks the future condition of his people! "And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all the peoples whither the Lord shall lead thee away."² Israel, for the past two thousand years, has been scattered over the earth. Among the nations she has had, and now has "no rest for the sole of her foot." In every country of the world the Jew is now found and ostracized "because he is a Jew." Among the peoples of the earth to-day he is an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word. He has been driven by the edicts of kings, at some time in history, from every country on the eastern continent, and is now a subject of unjust criticism and ostracism in every country of the world. For some reason he is the hated race. Even his features distinguish him among the other races of men, and, notwithstanding he may change his name, as he has often done, to get rid of the race odium, yet his peculiar type of features "find him out." The prophet put it well when he said, "And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, and there shall be no rest for the sole of thy foot." He has been banished and recalled and again banished. At the close of the war by Titus, they were sold and carried into Egypt by ships by the tens of thousands, so that the slave markets were glutted and "no man would buy them."

¹ Deut. 28: 25, 49, 64. ² Deut. 28: 37.

They were banished from England by Edward I. They were also banished from France by Charles II.; from Prague by the queen of Bohemia; from Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella; as many as 800,000 Jews were said to have been banished. They purchased refuge in Portugal from John II., and were again banished by Emanuel. In our own day, they have been banished from Poland and from Russia, and on the books of the latter the decree stands, and is in full force. When these banishments ensued in the different countries, the property of the banished, as a rule, was confiscated in the interest of the "crown," and the poor Jew was sent out a penniless wanderer in a strange land.¹ But, notwithstanding these peoples have been scattered among the nations and ruled by them, as did Henry III., who "always polled the Jews at every low ebb of his fortunes," yet they have not been consumed "utterly," but exist now as a distinct people, and prosper, too, among all the nations of the earth, for said Jehovah, "And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, neither will I abhor them to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the Lord their God."² Israel's lamp has never gone out amid "so many wars, battles, and sieges, after so many fires, famines, and pestilences, after so many rebellions, massacres, and persecutions, after so many years of captivity, slavery, and misery," for Jacob is yet among the nations, an "astonishment, a proverb, and a byword," the same unsolved problem of the modern, as he was of the ancient world, with more than

¹ See Newton on the Prophecies. ² Lev. 26:44.

40,000 of his sons and daughters now settled in and about the sacred city of their fathers. Indeed, so marvellous is this prediction of Israel's lawgiver and its fulfillments, that even to the very letter has it either been, or is now being, fulfilled in the strange history and varied life of this chosen people. There is nothing like it in the annals of any other peoples. It is indeed a fact that even the modern writer and interpreter of this prophecy too often represents, or rather misrepresents the Jew as the very synonym of avarice, usury, and hard-heartedness, and assigns that as a reason why he is an "astonishment, proverb, and a byword among the nations." But be this as it may, yet by the historian, the statesman, the artist, and the theologian he is a marked man. And, indeed, this is more remarkable still when we recognize the fact that the great nations among whom Israel is scattered and despised go to the Jew for their Bible, and take one of the sons of this "hated race" and worship him as King of kings and Lord of lords, and hope for salvation alone through his mediation.

**The History
of the
Peoples
Adjacent to
Israel a
Fulfillment
of
Prophecy.**

5. The prophet Amos threatened Ammon, Moab, Philistia, and Edom. These countries were adjacent to Judea, and were in their highest prosperity when the prophet raised his voice against them, and at the same time threatened Israel with judgment. The complete ruin of Moab and Amon was foretold by Zephaniah, "Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Amon as Gomorrah, a possession of nettles, and salt-pits, and a perpetual desolation."¹ Jeremiah, Ezekiel,

¹Zeph. 2: 9.

Isaiah, and Obadiah picture, in striking language, the utter destruction of Edom. "And Edom shall become an astonishment. . . . As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the Lord, no man shall dwell there," etc.¹ No man can pass over these countries named and visit their ruined cities and not be impressed with the fulfillment of these predictions. Where are the Amorites, the Edomites, the Canaanites, and the Philistines? They are gone forever. The Moabites, too, have perished. Philistia is no more. Many of these cities were for ages commercial centers. Their peoples once dictated peace and war to their neighbors at will, but they have forever perished from among the nations, and their once proud cities, like the fabric of a vision, scarcely have left a wreck behind them.

**Return of
the Jews
from
Babylon a
Fulfillment
of
Prophecy.**

The author of "The Monuments and the Old Testament"² has so well stated God's prophetic promise of his people's return to their own country from Babylon under Cyrus that I will give his words in full: "The significance of the rise of Cyrus is vividly portrayed by the prophetic words to the exiles in Babylon. Words of comfort addressed to the exiles assure them (40:1, 2) that their punishment will soon cease. They shall return to their home-land, inhabit it, and rebuild their cities and restore the waste places (44:26). This shall be accomplished by a deliverer who is already on his way to conquer. 'Who hath raised up one from the east, whom he calleth in righteousness to his foot? he giveth nations before him and maketh him rule over

¹ Jer. 49: 17, 18; Obed. 1; Ezek. 25, 35. ² P. 231.

kings; he giveth them as the dust to his sword, as the driven stubble to his bow. He pursueth them, and passeth on safely; even by a way that he had not gone with his feet. Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I, Jehovah, the first, and with the last, I am he' (Isa. 41: 2-4). Again, we find: 'Thus saith Jehovah to his anointed [selected], Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him, and I will loose the loins of kings; to open the doors before him, and the gates shall not be shut. . . . For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel my chosen, I have called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee though thou hast not known me. I am Jehovah, and there is none else; beside me there is no God: I will gird thee, though thou hast not known me' (45: 1, 4, 5). Cyrus is distinctly designated as the agent of Jehovah to conquer the nations. His mission was a providential one, and in no sense because he was a worshiper of Jehovah, for the sake of his servant Jacob.

"To deliver the Jews it was necessary that the great Babylon, the pride of her kings, the yoke of her subjects, should fall. Numerous prophecies from Jeremiah down had pictured her doom. But the conqueror is not at hand. 'Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. . . . Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called The lady of kingdoms.' 'Thou art wearied in the multitude

of thy counsels: let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from the things that shall come upon thee. Behold, they shall be as stubble; . . . there shall be none to save thee' (47:1, 5, 13, 15). Nothing that they can muster shall be able to avert the certain doom of the wicked city. On the eve of its fall, the prophet sees some of its consequences. 'Bel (Merodach) boweth down, Nebo stoopeth; their idols are upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: the things that ye carried about are made a load, a burden to the weary beast. They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity' (46:1, 2). The substance of these and other prophecies is, that Babylon must be humiliated, her proud position surrendered, and even her idols become a load for beasts, and not a joy to their own worshipers. This last statement was fulfilled only in the sense that the idols, as contrasted with Jehovah's power, who was bringing this about, would be merely a burden of useless material. For as Cyrus himself claimed, it was under the auspices of the gods that he marched into Babylon.

"Having already given (§§213, 214) the contemporaneous records of the fall of Babylon, let us now consider the Jewish return. We have noted (§215) that Cyrus inaugurated a policy of generosity towards his new subjects, that he endeavored to promote in every way their welfare. As a wise statesman, a shrewd politician, and a kind-hearted ruler, he planned methods by which he could better the condition of his peoples. He was ready to espouse their cause almost to the en-

dangerment of his throne. He revered their gods, and where they had been neglected or desecrated, he was solicitous for their restoration to their former veneration. Babylon and all its precincts bore evidences of his spirit in the rebuilding and rededication of many shrines and temples. His own appeals to the gods, and his avowal of their support, reveal Cyrus as a polytheist of a pronounced type. It was not a matter of monotheism, of a possible Zoroastrianism, that called his attention to the Jews, but other reasons of no mean proportions. (1) In addition to the restoration and rehabilitation of captive and dethroned deities, he says (Cyl. 32): 'All of their peoples I gathered together and restored to their own dwelling-places.' This definitely stated national policy gives us one reason for the royal proclamation (Ezra 1:2-4) issued in favor of the Jews. (2) It is altogether probable that Cyrus caught up from some one in Babylonia the mission which had been assigned him by the prophets. 'Cyrus . . . is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid' (Isa. 44:28). (3) Palestine had been a kind of buffer-state from time immemorial between southwestern Asia and Egypt. To occupy and hold that strong fortress, Jerusalem was the first step toward the conquest of the rival power. If Cyrus could conserve that advantage by aiding the Jews to build and hold it, he would be setting up one battlement in the face of Egypt's army. For one of his next strokes would be at the rival power on the Nile.

"Cyrus issued his proclamation authorizing the re-

turn of the Jewish exiles in the first year of his sovereignty as king of Persia (Ezra 1:1), 538 B. C. It is entirely reasonable to conjecture that, in accordance with his general principles of government, he issued many similar documents. The copy quoted in Ezra 1:2-4, gives a few only of the specifications originally announced. In subsequent references to the document (3:2-7; 5:13-16; 6:1-5), we discover that elaborate provisions were made for the building of the temple, as well as for the reinauguration of the worship of Jehovah. Cyrus had not overlooked anything that would contribute to the rapid reclamation of this western waste. The proclamation was of such scope as to include the Jews in any part of his realm. The citizens of the empire were also authorized, if they chose, to render assistance to the pilgrims to Palestine. How generally they responded to the royal edict is stated in Ezra 2. This pilgrimage of less than fifty thousand of the faithful to the land of their fathers relieved the administration of Cyrus from the presence, in any part of the realm, of a dissatisfied, disturbing Jewish element. It also populated and built up a section of his territory which had been overrun and devastated by successive armies of Assyria and Babylonia. It likewise gave spirit to a people whose national life had been next to blotted out by a succession of well-deserved chastisements and captivities. In this event many of the brightest and most hopeful utterances of the great prophets found their fulfillment and their fruition."

6. Marvelous and striking as are the prophecies of the Old Testament, and their fulfillment, nevertheless,

**New
Testament
Prophecies
and Their
Fulfillment.**

the predictions of the New Testament are none the less so.

Christ Jesus was not only the Saviour of the world, but also a great prophet. Of him said Moses, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me."¹ From the opening to the close of his ministry, his discourses are interspersed with predictions; and these predictions were made to serve as a proof of his mission, when the things predicted would come to pass. "Now," said the Master, "I tell you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he."² He predicted his "suffering," his "death," and his "resurrection." From the heights of Olivet he looked down upon the doomed city and contemplated its sad fate, and said of the temple, "The days will come in which there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down . . . until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."³ No prophecy more terrific is found in the Word of God than those recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, as the express utterances of our blessed Lord against the Jews, Jerusalem, and their temple; and the person who is informed of the destruction of the sacred city and the nation by the Romans and all the subsequent history of that city and its people knows that those utterances are to the letter fulfilled. From the destruction of Jerusalem, in 70 A. D., to the present hour, "Jerusalem has been trodden down of the Gen-

¹Deut. 18: 15. ²John 13: 19. ³Luke 21: 6; 21: 24; 19: 41; Matt. 24; Mark 13.

tiles, and the Jews have been scattered to the ends of the earth." "Famines," "pestilences," "earthquakes," and "wars and rumors of wars" were the current history of events. In the temple stood the statue of Caligula, "where it ought not." "Nation rose against nation," "kingdom against kingdom," and the world was a whirlpool in the clash of arms and civil commotion. Nothing equal to it can be found in the annals of nations, in point of famine, cruelty, and death. Mothers ate their own children, and suicide was the order of the day to escape a more wretched death by falling into the hands of the conquering foe. "For," said the Son of man, "then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be." More than one million perished in the siege, while tens of thousands were sold into slavery. The darkest pictures in human history are the horrors of this siege, described by Josephus, who was an eyewitness. Notwithstanding Titus implored the Jews to save their city by submitting to his conquering host, yet they scorned his mercy and proffered clemency. Contrary to the orders of the conqueror, a firebrand was hurled into the temple, and then, by command of Titus, the city was razed to the ground, and its sad history in each passing hour since has been but the fulfillment of the Galilean's prophecies.

7. But the predictions of Paul respecting the "man of sin,"¹ and John, in Revelation, of the "beast with ten horns and seven heads,"² are none the less graphic than those already noted. Doubtless, Paul and John being

**Prophecy
Regarding
the "Man
of Sin"
Fulfilled.**

¹ II. Thes. 2: 1-12. ² Rev. 13: 1-9.

familiar with the books of Daniel, drew somewhat from his vivid imagery. That a great apostacy has taken place in the church of Christ is a matter of history. The facts and the history of the Inquisition under the papacy are the evidences of the apostacy, and not only point to the ten-horned beast, but to the "man of sin" as well. "The foundations of popery," says Newton, "were laid indeed in the apostles' days, but the superstructure was raised by degrees, and several ages passed before the building was completed, and the 'man of sin' was revealed in full."¹ It is a fact well known that when the Roman empire was smitten, shattered, and broken to pieces, the empire of an apostate church, the man of sin, was raised on its ruins. John said, "And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder . . . when they behold the beast, how that he was, and is not, and shall become." The Roman empire, while pagan, was a persecuting power, and was the beast. When she was converted to Christianity she ceased her persecutions, and was not the beast; but when she became papal Rome she again became the beast, as her history clearly shows. But whether you take Paul's "man of sin" or John's ten-horned beast, place them alongside the history of the church's apostacy, and you have a living picture of the papacy, together with the varied shades of apostacy, no difference when and where it developed in church history. But the "man of sin" is now in his decline, and will ultimately be abolished by the brightness of his coming and the breath of his mouth.

¹ Newton, p. 406.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DOCTRINES AND TEACHINGS OF THE SCRIPTURES ACCORD WITH THE FACTS OF HUMAN HISTORY.

1. AS STATED elsewhere in this treatise, the existence of God is assumed, and the task of proof is left to the theologian. The God of revelation, set forth in the Old and New Testament, is a God unique in character, infinitely wise, just, and holy, and possessed of an utter abhorrence of evil, and "that will by no means clear the guilty," yet "keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin."¹ Surely, this exalted God of the Bible is in strict accord with man's highest conception of the divine Being. No truly well-informed critic has found fault with the Holy Scriptures on the ground of the character of its God. Jesus Christ, the God-man, the *self-revelation of God*, in the life he lived on earth, set forth in a true light God manifest, as he (God) is revealed in the Bible. In him men saw, and now see the real God of revelation. Jesus appealed to Moses and the prophets as witnesses of his Godhood, and put his life before the world as the evidence that he, in all respects, measured up to what the Holy Scriptures recorded respecting the infinite and Holy One.

**The
Character
of the
God of the
Bible.**

2. The Old Testament opens its pages with the story

¹ Ex. 34: 7.

**The Fall of
Man.**

of creation and the dark history of the primitive families of mankind. The sad Eden story is briefly but pointedly told. The bad life of Cain and the wicked career of primitive man is pathetically recorded in the solemn and warning words, "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." "And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not strive with man for ever."¹ In this straight, clear, declarative style the sacred writers continue to record their inspired communications to the close of the sacred record. Not one word of palliation is found in the holy Book for man's bad and unworthy life; but there is a constant stream of utterances setting forth his depraved and wicked life; not one exception is recorded in the Book of the whole family of the race, but the Christ. "For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God."² "The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is desperately wicked."³ "The heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."⁴ "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God; they have all turned aside, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not so much as one: . . . there is no fear of God before their eyes."⁵ "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart."⁶ Thus the divine Word, like a mighty, rushing river, from the beginning to the close of its pages, pours its accusations

¹ Gen. 6: 5; 6: 3. ² Rom. 3: 23. ³ Jer. 17: 9. ⁴ Eccl. 8: 11.

⁵ Rom. 3: 10-12, 18. ⁶ Eccl. 9: 3.

against man as a race, and as an individual as well, that he is "evil, and only evil continually."

3. Now, are these charges against man, as set forth in the Holy Scriptures, verified in the history of the race and in the life of each individual of the race? The dark and wicked deeds of men enter into and make up much of the history of every tribe, race, and nation of peoples. To this statement there is not one exception. It is just as true of the civilized as it is of the uncivilized, of the cultured and the refined, as it is of the savage. The history of war and blood, as it has played its role among the tribes, nations, and families of men, is but a record of human sin. The prisons, the executioner's block, and the gallows are a direct witness to the truth of the charges of evil against him recorded in the holy Book. This is a fact of which the world is not ignorant. The sin of the world has been the theme of the historian and the sorrow of the moralist in all the ages. Heathen sages wrote upon the nature of virtue and morality, and urged the obligation to practice them; but their own vices demonstrated that they were either ignorant of their true nature or utterly unable to practice what they taught. Even the practices of Socrates were the very opposite in many respects of what he taught.

The pagan world's knowledge of sin and consciousness of guilt led it into every form of idolatry and debasing orgies, until their altars smoked with the hot blood of their human sacrifices. On an occasion when Carthage was to be besieged, says Diodorus, "They immolated in public sacrifice two hundred chosen boys of

**The History
of Man
Confirms
the Bible
Account
of His
Character.**

their principal nobility.”¹ Justin speaks thus, “They immolated men as victims, and children, whose tender years excited the pity even of enemies.”² And while I write, a young man from a pagan land who sits by my side, says, “Yes, my great-grandfather was buried between two living slaves, who should accompany him in the spirit world.” When Cortez entered the great temple in the city of Mexico he saw the walls almost covered with human hearts, the warm blood of the poor victims dripping therefrom, a sacrifice to their gods. Turn to what age you will, or to what quarter of the globe you please, you find the sin of man’s soul is the source of his sorrow.

“The palaces of the Cæsars raised their imperial turrets to the skies, crowned with matchless magnificence; but within they were stained with every species of impurity. It is not possible to read the accounts given of these monarchs who held the scepter of the world without pity and indignation. The narration of Suetonius alternately elevates and depresses, informs and pollutes the mind of the reader; and if one moment we follow the warrior through his victories and participate in his triumph, the next discovers him to us in his retirement, an object of horror and disgust, ‘committing all manner of uncleanness with greediness.’”³ You may well imagine the general contagion and reign of vice among the masses and all classes when even Horace sacrifices his genius to shameless indecency, and the matchless pen of Virgil sullied his pages with wanton impurity.

¹Diod. lib. 20. ²Just. Hist. lib. 18: ch. 6. ³Collyer’s lectures, p. 40.

4. But while it must be apparent to all right-minded men that, under the reign of the kingdom of God, righteousness is making headway against sin, yet there is enough of vice in the modern world to verify the truths of the Bible in its charge against the race as being sinners. The daily record of crime under the world's best civilization and among its most enlightened peoples is indirectly God's daily public witness of the truth of his Word on the subject of sin. Modern wars, mob violence, drunkenness, fraud, and the low brothels of vice, tolerated by the most enlightened Christian nations, together with secret and open sins of the masses, both in public and in private life at the present hour, are a wonderful commentary of the truth of these Scriptures.

The Holy Bible recognizes man as a triune being—a trichotomy in him—soul, body, and spirit. As such, the body is the medium between the soul and nature, the spirit its medium of relation to the supernatural. Sensuous experience comes to the soul through this bodily organism, resulting in conscious, definite knowledge of material phenomena; spiritual experience of spiritual, universal, and eternal phenomena-realities, comes to it through its spirit medium. By the former it has sense cognitions; by the latter, reason cognitions. The one gives knowledge of the creature; the other of the Creator. By the one comes a knowledge of the finite; by the other, of the infinite God. These are the soul's mediums of knowledge of things, whether material or spiritual, human or divine. Thus constituted, he is capacitated to know the truth—divine truth as well as human. In this light he is recognized in the Word

**Man
Conscious
of Sin and
Guilt.**

of God, and given the assurance by our blessed Lord that "he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God." On this conscious knowledge of the believer Jesus was willing to rest his case.

There is nothing which a man knows so well as the life he lives. He knows whether he lives a worthy or a double life. He is conscious of the inward impulses of his nature and of his liability to be attracted by, and his inclination to yield to, forbidden wickedness. He is conscious, also, of the fact that too often, contrary to reason, to what he believes to be the Word of God, and to the voice of conscience; knowingly he walks deliberately into sin and lives a conscious wicked life; and, when entrapped by justice or lashed by a guilty conscience, as was King Saul, in the bitterness of his soul he cries, "O wretched man that I am." This consciousness of sin, although perhaps not always equally well understood, has kept pace with the ages, and is as broad as the family of mankind. The smoke and incense from every pagan altar, as well as every prayer that has ascended from human lips, is a witness to the soul's conscious knowledge of its wickedness and an appeal to Heaven for pardon of man's sins. He who informs himself in the Holy Scriptures, and especially in its doctrines of sin in relation to man, then lays the whole history of his race, aye, his own personal life history, alongside them, cannot but be impressed, as was the woman at the well, in her conversation with her Lord, namely, that he has found a book that reveals to him all that he or all that his race ever did; and a conviction will obtain that the mind that made the book is the

mind that made both him and his race. There is not a corner or a crevice in the human soul that is not searched and exposed by this wonderful Book; and he who thoroughly studies its pages is conscious that his sins are not concealed from the mind of its Author. It teaches not only that man is a sinner, but that he is personally guilty before God on account of his sins. Here, again, man's consciousness comes in as a witness to the truth of the Word. The altars and the sacrifices of the ages are but the evidence and the acknowledgment of the soul's wail and bitter sorrow for conscious guilt.

5. This sacred Book witnesses not alone against man as a sinner. If it did only this, it would be a sad book, indeed, to him, for this he knows, hence it would reveal no new truth to him; it would only confirm him in his conviction of sin. But the Book does not stop here; it goes forward and tells him how he may get rid of his sins and secure pardon for them. Moreover, it tells him how, and gives him the assurance that he shall come into possession of conscious knowledge of pardoned sins and peace with God. "We know that we have passed out of death into life."¹

**The Bible
Offers
Pardon and
Peace to
Man.**

Man's dual nature is such that upon him is ever two classes of wants. His physical nature demands food and raiment. His spirit, to which belongs the intellectual and the moral, has its wants. Now, as the experiences of life are enlarged and the field of thought is broadened, in the moral nature of man springs up a consciousness of the moral or the immoral quality of his actions. This sense of wrong-doing always produces in

¹I. John 3: 14.

the actor conditions of unrest. Also, the noblest impulses and aspirations of the soul are inadequately met by all things earthly, and at every step in life the wants increase more and more, and the world's utter insufficiency to meet them becomes more and more evident. Now, just as the hungry man knows that the food which he takes satisfies his hunger, so also the man who complies with the conditions of salvation set forth in the sacred Scriptures, knows that the religion of Christ meets his moral want, and that the sacred Word is a revelation from God. For there is a hidden truth contained in the religion of the Cross, which, through faith in the believer, leads him up into conscious knowledge of pardoned sins, peace with God, and that the Word is truth. "I will give him a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it."¹ This is the secret of the church's power, and has sustained the martyr at the stake and lifted the impure and profane into the happy condition of holiness and peace. Bearing on this subject, says Luther, "God, therefore, must witness to thee in thy heart that 'this is God's Word.'"² Also says the same great and good man, in speaking of the witness of the Spirit, "This testimony takes place in this way, namely, that as the Spirit works in us through the Word, we feel and become conscious of his power, and of the agreement of our experience with the word or declaration of the gospel." This statement is the experience of every true believer, and witnesseth to the truth of God's Word.

¹ Rev. 2: 17. ² Sprecher's Theology, pp. 102-104.

CHAPTER X.

THE SUPERIORITY OF CHRISTIANITY OVER OTHER RELIGIONS AND ITS INTRINSIC WORTH A PROOF OF ITS DIVINE ORIGIN.

1. SYSTEMS of religion are many. A fiber of gold may run through them all, but they are not equally good. Religions, like systems of philosophy and machinery, must be tested by what they do. A system of philosophy that begets dissensions and degrades man, is condemned as bad. A piece of machinery, it may be the farmer's plow, or the carpenter's plane, is judged as to its merit, by the manner in which it does its work; and that is always pronounced the best which does its work the best. Just so with religions; that is best which gives the highest, the purest, and most perfect and upright type of civilized man. Christianity has not had an open field on which to fight its battles. At the time of its introduction the whole world was pagan, except Israel, which was but a remnant then. These pagan religions had been in the field long, and their merits well tested, even before the advent, but surely they were not satisfactory.

**Religions
Tested by
What They
Do.**

2. The best systems of paganism are full of defects. Their conceptions of God were remarkably coarse and crude. Even Socrates, who was the purest and wisest of the pagan world, while he believed in a supreme God,

Imperfections of Pagan Religions.

believed also "in lords many and gods many." As a rule, the god or gods even of the most cultivated of the Gentile nations were clothed with the corrupt and base passions of men, and took delight in human sacrifice. In truth, few of the heathen world did not have, at some time in their history, either directly or indirectly, human sacrifices connected with their worship. There are a great want and woe felt in the soul of man that pagan worship has never satisfied. I care not whether it be the religion of our ancestors or the religion of the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Persians, the Chinese, or the Indians, their conceptions of God, his attributes, and their worship were most confused and unworthy, and wholly out of accord with enlightened reason. The Persians, followers of their sage, Zoroaster, worshiped the sun, or light, because he brought day and banished the frosts of winter and revived the dead earth with the bloom of summer. But night brought rest to man, and ought to share in his reverence, hence the moon worshipers shouted, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." These were but two of the heavenly host, hence they divided the empire of the universe between two antagonistic deities. A kindred conception also obtained among the pantheistic worshipers of India. Of all the ancient civilized nations, none were greater than the Egyptians, and in religion none were more excessive than they. About the middle of the fifth century B. C., Herodotus visited Egypt. In speaking of their religion, he said, "It was easier to find a god in Egypt than a man," and that they were "religious to excess." Polytheism had set in at an early period in human his-

tory, and in Egypt deification was almost without limit. The same thing was true among the Greeks and the Romans. No sooner had the human mind conceived the counterpart of its imaginary god in nature than followed Apollo, Hercules, and Diana; and, in its infatuation, every object on earth, in sea, or sky was deified under the names of Jupiter, Saturn, Juno, Neptune, and Venus, until the catalogue was almost infinite. On other subjects they reasoned like philosophers, but on God and religion like fools. The attributes of their deities were, in many respects, monstrous. A veil must cover the principles and vile acts of these pretended deities. The cheek of innocence would blush at the recital of the tales of shame in the ear of modesty. All this shame and gross impurity, uncleanness, and the most detestable vices were ascribed by these sons of reason and philosophy to the invisible and holy God of the universe. Each of the pagan nations recognized that there was one supreme deity who was chief among all the gods, yet always differed as to which was the chief, hence discord and a lack of harmony obtained among them.

3. No person who has read the unexpurgated classics, and especially the "Satires" of Juvenal, will, for a moment, question the faithfulness of the keen, incisive charges of St. Paul in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. As a rule, his picture is everywhere true to pagan life. The pictures on the walls in Pompeii tell a wonderful, but sad story of pagan impurity. There was not a vice included under the name *lasciviousness* that "was not sanctioned, encouraged, and practiced

**Pagan
Religions
Immoral.**

under the holy and venerable name of religion." "The more infamous the rites, the more acceptable were they supposed to be to the Deity."

It is difficult to conceive that our ancestors offered their innocent children as sacrifices to their gods. Yes, our ancestors, the Druids, had an enormous image in which they consumed their victims, and then scattered their ashes over the soil. Not only by burning, but by the most cruel and inhuman methods did they offer their human sacrifices, and their dark religious orgies are scarcely paralleled in history by any other race.

China numbers about one-fourth of the family of mankind. Confucius is her sage. He was a moralist, and taught much that was good, but he made no pretensions to reveal the invisible. His great struggle was to revise the old customs and laws of his ancestors, from which, he claimed, his nation had departed. He was devout and sincere, and some have said that the Golden Rule is found in his teachings. True, he was the author of precepts not without value, both ethical and political; but with him, as with every other ethnic teacher to whom it is ascribed, it is found, if found at all, in a negative form, or in connection with some other precept or principle from which it may be deduced. But place his teachings side by side with the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, and they fade into confusion. Great as has been his influence in the past, his star is now waning. There are not in his system those elements of expansion essential to keep abreast with an advancing age, and which are found to exist in Christianity.

4. But what did any one or all of these religions ac-

comply for mankind? In not one instance did they develop a true civilization. They developed literature, science, philosophy, and art, but morality and purity in the individual life and in society, which are essential to a true and noble civilization, they developed not. Their peoples were like the gods they worshiped. True, those ages produced men who wrote well, and who recorded some worthy moral precepts, but the history of those times shows that the private character of those who wrote them was the very opposite of the precepts they gave for others and the principles which they recorded. Among the nations of antiquity, where do you find the highest type of man, and a government where the rights of all are respected? Not the Assyrian, not the Egyptian, not in India, not in China, nor in Greece, nor in Rome. Each of these has had its government, but not in any one of them have the civil rights of all been respected. Each has had its great men, but not one whose life was without fault. Out of the slave-pens of Egypt, God took the man, Moses, to organize a model government in Israel, in which the rights of all were respected, the model government of antiquity. What nation had a lawgiver like Moses? What people produced a character like Job? Whence came the prophets? Aye, from what race sprang the "*faultless Man*," Jesus, the Nazarene? Israel was homed midway between the East and the West, on the world's great battlefield, and there served, both in her religion and laws, as the lighthouse of Jehovah to illuminate the world. What made Israel the model government of the ancient world? Her re-

The Superiority of the Christian Religion Shown in Its Worshipers and in Its Civilization.

ligion. She had the best religion, and it is religion that determines the *status*, both of man and his government. This has been true in all ages. It is true now. Religion, like man, is known by its fruits. In the modern world, where do we find the highest type of man and the best form of government? Is it in China? in India? or in Africa? No, but within the belt of nations known as Christian. Here is where man is most highly civilized; here no altar smokes with human sacrifices; here the rights of man are respected and home is the garden of God. And why? Because here is the best religion—the Christian religion. These Christian nations and this Christian civilization are the product of Christ's religion which he gave to man.

**Christianity
Perfect in
Morals and
Adapted to
Meet all the
Spiritual
Needs of
Man.**

5. Christianity, in its breadth and moral purity, differs from all other religions in this: it includes every virtue and moral precept belonging to every other religion, and is free from every defect, moral or otherwise, that attaches to all other religions. This is its triumph. Its morality is pure, vital, intelligible, personal, and adapted to the most humble capacity. It is founded in knowledge, and is not the offspring of ignorance. Its appeals are to reason and to conscious knowledge. Knowledge alone is not religion, but without it, true religion cannot exist. All other religions are more or less clothed in mystery. Their theology is a system of complex, incomprehensible theories, if intelligible at all, only to the philosopher and the priest, while the humble masses are imposed upon with grossest fables as a substitute for religion, of which Buddhism, Mohammedanism, and Confucianism are now striking illus-

trations. But Christianity is the consolation alike of the poor and of the rich. The gospel "is no respecter of persons." It has no mysteries, dark to a plain understanding, and fathomable only by the philosopher; no mysteries but such as are necessarily beyond the limited comprehension of human reason; therefore, equally mysterious and obscure to the wise and to the unwise. The fundamental principles and precepts descend to the uncultivated capacity of the "wayfaring man" as their competent judge. Christianity includes all as guilty before God. "For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God." "Through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all have sinned."¹ So, also, it includes all in its redemptive scheme. The religion of Jesus Christ adapts itself to every want and condition of all men, and it hides the poor under the shadow of its broad wings from every ill and injury of life. One of its most glorious triumphs is, not only that it gives life and cheer as it develops in the soul of the believer, but that its comforts and consolations are abiding, even unto death, for in the history of Christianity there is not one case on record or in tradition where a Christian at death regretted that he had lived a disciple of his blessed Lord. Here is its grand victory! It is equally suited to the east, the west, the north, and the south; it alike meets the needs of the Eskimo and the South Sea Islander, Caucasian and African. Each is included in the charge it brings against man, each life lived has justified the charge, and each individual mem-

¹ Rom. 3: 23; 5: 12.

ber of the whole family of mankind is equally interested in the discoveries it makes of "life and immortality brought to light" by its Founder. How different all this from the teachings of paganism. Buddhism exhorts to renounce the desire of a future life. Karma knows nothing of continued personal identity and immortality. Nirvana dissolves conscious identity hereafter. Says T. W. Rhys Davids of the Buddhistic religion, "In it we have an ethical system, but no lawgiver, a world without a creator, a salvation without eternal life, and a sense of evil, but no conception of pardon, atonement, reconciliation, or redemption."¹ Plato, wise and great in philosophy, plodded his way up the mist-en-shrouded coast of ontology to the throne of the Infinite, yet he could give no satisfactory answer how to get rid of evil and become like God. He conceived ignorance to be the chief source of sin, and philosophy the panacea for all such maladies, but, alas! he taught that only a few could attain to such knowledge.

6. The schools of the Epicureans and the Stoic philosophers dominated the Roman Empire in the opening century of the Christian era, and this empire was, in a sense, the then civilized world. It was in the face of these schools and their teachers and pupils, on the one hand, and the rabbinical schools and their teachers, on the other, that Christianity was introduced to the world. This also was the age and the world empire in which literature, philosophy, and paganism reached their culmination in the ancient world. Here and then it fought its first battles. It was these Epicureans and

**Christianity
Alone Set
Forth a
Perfect
Ideal and a
Perfect Ex-
ample for
Life.**

¹T. W. Rhys Davids, in *Non-Christian Religions*, page 131.

Stoics with whom St. Paul disputed in Athens. The resurrection of the dead, and immortality were so foreign to their conceptions that when he referred to the subject, "some mocked; but others said, We will hear thee concerning this yet again."¹ The charge that Paul makes against the Athenians, that "the city was full of idols," is verified by the history of the world in that age. The Epicureans taught a system of morality which made pleasure the highest good and the only true happiness of life; hence all action should be directed to this end. It was strictly materialistic and atheistic. Carried out to its last analysis, it gives fruit such as obtained in society during the Roman emperors, the English deists, and the French encyclopædists—a beastly debauchery and imbecile stupidity. The Stoic philosophy was better, and developed better morals among its disciples. The three greatest were Seneca, the advocate, and greatest literary character of his age, Epictetus, the slave, and Marcus Aurelius, the emperor. These, in many respects, were noble men, but their teachings were for the philosophers, and not for the mass of humanity. The morality they taught was remarkably imperfect, as each for himself well knew and was painfully conscious of the sad fact. As a result, their teachings were powerless to rouse the people and to stir the consciences of the profligate and wicked and lead them to a better life. Their system had no well-grounded hope of immortality, and was without a faultless example among its disciples. It swept from the human heart all desire, all passion, all pity; it had eyes, but no tears; a heart, but

¹ Acts 17: 32.

no emotions; it was cold, proud, and haughty, with affected insensibility and imaginary wisdom. "A perfect Stoic would be sterile, useless, inhuman." This is not Christianity, that weeps with those that weep, and rejoices with those who rejoice. "In contrast with all the ancient systems of philosophy, Christianity brought forward such a conception of God, that the precept to be like him was intelligible, and could be profitably obeyed. It brought forward the truth of a providence of God, extending over all persons and events, a universal care comprehending the least of God's creatures, and causing all things to conspire to promote the well-being of his children. Natural sensibility is not petrified. Natural affections and emotions are left in healthy activity, but trust in the fatherly love and wisdom of God enables the afflicted to be at peace. Moreover, in distinction from all other religions and philosophies, Christianity provides redemption. That is to say, while it holds up the ideal of perfection, the law of righteousness, it provides, at the same time, effectual means of attaining, through Jesus Christ, to the partial, and, ultimately, to the complete realization of it.

When the incomparable superiority of the Christian system over the other religions of the world and over the highest achievements of philosophy is duly appreciated, it appears unreasonable to think that Christianity sprang from the unaided intelligence of the humble, unlettered Hebrews who were the instruments of publishing its truths to the world."¹

¹ Fisher's Manual of Christian Evidences, p. 112.

CHAPTER XI.

SOME OBJECTIONS OF THE HONEST DOUBTER TO CHRISTIANITY ANSWERED.

THE sacred Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, claim to be a revelation of facts from God, as Father, to man, as his child. Men are the recorders of this revelation. Each writer tells his own story in his own way, not to demonstrate a proposition, but to state facts. In the mind of the author, and the recorder as well, of these facts the thought is nowhere hinted that they were to be questioned, disputed, or to be proved, but simply accepted and obeyed. And on no other hypothesis can the marvelous success of the gospel in the first century better be accounted for than on the fact that the disciples and the first preachers of the gospel acted upon the above principle. They "preached the Word." The age of controversy came later. Doubt assumed a formidable attitude towards the sacred Scriptures. Apologetics were written to dispel the doubt of the honest doubter and to bring in higher favor the Word of God. Just as in these Scriptures the existence of God is assumed, not by cogent argument proved, so Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apostles, assumed to state as facts what they said and recorded, but tarried not to prove them true by argument, claiming that to comply brought conscious knowledge of the truth stated

**The
Authors
and the
Recorders
of Revela-
tion Simply
State Facts.**

**The Pur-
pose of
Apologetics
Is to
Answer
Honest
Doubt.**

to the doer. This fact is too often overlooked or lost sight of, even by the honest doubter, for it ought to be remembered that in religion as in mathematics, there are some things axiomatic. Said Jesus, "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from myself." Just as the best evidence a man can have, whose sense of taste is normal, that the apple is sour is to taste it, so the sacred writers assumed that the highest evidence a man can have that their messages are Heaven-sent is to obey them.

But to the honest doubter's objections: "If Christ were really the Son of God, sent to save the world, why were not his credentials so attested that they would pass unchallenged?" the objector urges: "Little time is spent in the examination and discussion of the credentials of the representative of one government sent on some mission to another, because they are so clearly and unequivocally avouched that the above inspection is sufficient to satisfy those to whom they are addressed of their genuineness. In other words, they answer perfectly the purpose for which they were given. The credentials of Christ are still in dispute, although they have been under inspection for almost two thousand years." At first sight, this objection is not without force. But when it is critically examined, and the facts involved duly stated, the criticism breaks down. The cases are not parallel. The political governments of earth have knowledge of the existence of each other, but the kingdom of God, which Jesus came to represent, was a government unknown to men. At least, it was

**Why Were
Not Christ's
Credentials
so Attested
As to Pass
Unchal-
lenged?**

then, and now is admitted that he was the only representative who claimed to have come down from heaven to represent that government in that unknown country.

In the second place, his credentials:

(1) At his birth, an angel from heaven proclaimed him Heaven's ambassador. "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."¹ Also, a star led the "wise men" to the manger in Bethlehem where he was. "And lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was."² These supernatural occurrences, recorded by the evangelist as facts, were believed by all who witnessed them, or, at least, there is no record from that century that they were even questioned.

(2) The works which he performed were presented by him as his credentials. "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father."³ This, perhaps, had no reference to any one particular class of works, but to all the acts which he performed. Some were natural, others supernatural—his miracles. The eleventh chapter of Matthew opens with the information that "when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and preach in their cities." To him came John's disciples and asked, "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" Jesus said, "Tell John, . . . the blind receive their sight, and the

**Announced
by Angels.**

**He
Appealed to
His Works
As Credentials.**

¹Luke 2: 11. ²Matt. 2: 9. ³John 10: 37, 38.

lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them."¹ Now, the cases of Jesus miraculously restoring sight to the blind are recorded as follows: Matt. 9:27-30; 11:5; 12:2; 21:14; of Bartimæus, 20:30-34; Mark 10:46-52; 8:22-25; of a man at Bethsaida, a man born blind, John 9:1-7. Also, the cases in which he restored persons' hearing, Mark 7:37; 9:25. In which he raised the dead: widow's son, Luke 7:12-15; Jairus's daughter, Luke 8:49-55; Lazarus, John 11:43, 44. Lepers healed by Christ: Matt. 8:3; Mark 1:40-42; Luke 5:13; 17:12-14. He healed all manner of diseases among the people in a miraculous way, and cast out demons from the possessed, and he commanded the winds and the sea, and they obeyed him.² The reality of these miracles wrought by Christ were not questioned by the eye-witnesses, but were acknowledged by them as matters of fact. True, some who witnessed attributed them to satanic agencies: "But some of them said, By Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, casteth he out devils."³ As hinted above, it was not the men who witnessed the miracles performed by Christ who doubted their reality. They recognized them as genuine, but the age of doubt came later, just as doubts respecting other facts in history. We have an illustration in the writings of Shakespeare. In his day, his authorship of the writings which bore his name was not questioned, but the nineteenth century has produced volumes to disprove his authorship of those same writings. The same is true of Menes,

**The Fact of
Christ's
Miracles
Not Questioned by
His Contemporaries.**

¹ Matt. 11: 1. ² Matt. 8: 26-34. ³ Luke 11: 15.

the founder of the first dynasty of united Egypt, and also of King Minos, whose home and capital, according to Greek tradition, was located at Cnosus, on the island of Crete. Skeptical criticism has long since banished both these to the land of myth. But the recent discoveries at Abydos reveal the fact that "Menes and his successors were living in the full bloom of a civilization which was already old." Also, of King Minos, the discoveries of the past year by Mr. A. J. Evans, on the island of Crete, "have proved that the story of his power and civilization, instead of being mythical, really fell short of the truth, and that Cnosus was the chief seat of culture known as 'Mykenean' in the days when the eighteenth dynasty ruled over Egypt." The men who lived in the days of these kings, and were their subjects, had no doubts respecting the real existence of those monarchies and the acts performed by Menes and Minos. But the age of doubt came later, and so increased until doubt ripened into unbelief, and swept them from the domain of history. This is a fact that must not be overlooked, namely, that the men of one age cannot believe for men of succeeding ages. They can record the facts of history, political and religious, of the age in which they live, and, in so far as they are concerned, the matter rests there. It is just so with Jesus of Nazareth. He came to earth, the ambassador of the kingdom of God; he presented, as the seal of his ambassadorship, his miracles, organized that kingdom, pushed his religion into history, and has left it for the ages to demonstrate his heavenly mission.

Now, it is beyond the power of the human intellect to

The Credentials Christ Presented Were the Highest Conceivable to Human Reason.

conceive of any higher proof of Christ's divine mission than the credentials (miracles) and his own personality which he presented. Here two things must be taken into the account: first, as implied in a former statement, the country and kingdom which he came to represent was unknown to the children of earth, except only in so far as they had learned from the Hebrew Scriptures; second, the message which he brought to man was a message condemning both the then existing governments of earth and the religions of paganism and the religious lives of the people to whom he came. He laid the axe at the root of the tree, paganism and the false religious life of the peoples, and, at the same time, claimed universal sovereignty for the government which he represented, and demanded the annihilation of all of earth's religious systems then existing, and proclaimed the ultimate, universal acceptance of his own, and himself as King of kings and Lord of lords. I would, in the spirit of my Lord, ask the honest doubter: If an ambassador from any known government on earth were to present his credentials to the government of Great Britain, and set up claims for his government and make demands such as did Jesus of Nazareth upon the governments of earth, would his credentials be likely to receive higher recognition than Christ's did? Would not some doubt? And would not likely more doubters arise as the world would recede from the date of the event? It is said, "The credentials of Christ are still in dispute, although they have been under inspection for almost two thousand years." How long would the credentials of the ambassador supposed be "under inspection" by the gov-

ernment of Great Britain before she would recognize them? Not until England's navy was swept from the seas, and her army dismantled of its broken shields. The recognition of the Christ as Heaven's ambassador is one thing, but surrendering a life of obedience to his demands is quite different. Judging from the course of the world in his day, and now, the latter seems to be the more difficult for man. There are many ten thousands of peoples in almost every Christian land who believe Jesus to be the world's Redeemer and Lord, and that to be saved and not perish they must surrender themselves to him and live a pure and worthy life, yet they do not make that surrender and do not live that pure and worthy life, but live in the daily open violation of what they believe to be God's Word and displeasing to Jesus Christ, whose credentials they recognize as from God. All this is a matter of conscious knowledge to them.

(3) In the personality of Jesus and the life which he lived is great weight of evidence. Christ Jesus is greater than any or all of the works he did, or the marvelous life he lived. He stands the Colossus, unapproached and unapproachable among the sons of men. He taught that all men should repent, but he repents not. He lays sin at the door of every man of the race, but asks, "Which of you convinceth *me* of sin?" His life was spotless. Born amid the degeneracy of his race, and in an age of lust and shame, he lived and wrought in the interest of the degraded and sinful, untouched and untarnished by the vices of men. No one like him lived before his day, and no one since his day.

The Character of Jesus the Best Credential.

Account for everything in him and about him on natural principles as far as you can, yet there stands the sinless Christ, the friend of sinners, as he represented himself to be. Now, I believe the evidences of Christianity are so convincing, and especially the personality of Jesus and the miracles which he performed, as recorded in the four Gospels, that any man who will examine them carefully with a view to obeying the teachings of Christ, if convinced they are true, will always attain to a faith or belief sufficient for a working basis, and if he does not, I would say that responsibility for the lack of faith does not obtain in his case, just as a man who is color-blind is not responsible for not being able to distinguish colors. But there is one thing for which he is responsible, namely, the life he lives, for it must be remembered that Christ requires only the life every man should live, which life is for the highest good of the individual and of society. In his own words, "Love thy neighbour as thyself,"¹ and in "all things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them; for this is the law and the prophets."² This is the very soul of human duty. Also, the prophet puts the gist of what every life should be in the sight of God in these terse words, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"³ Every man is morally bound by the laws of society to live such a life as is here described, whether he is an honest doubter or a dishonest doubter; and Christianity demands at his hand no more than the

**Evidence
Sufficient to
Convince
All Who
Are Willing
to Obey.**

**Doubt Does
Not Release
Man from
Moral
Obligation
to Obey God
and Serve
His Fellow-
Men.**

¹ Mark 12: 31. ² Matt. 7: 12. ³ Mich. 6: 8.

rights of man, and the highest interests of society demand of him in the character of the life which he ought to live. The author of nature gives no man beforehand an absolute guarantee that he shall reap a harvest from the seed which he casts into the ground; he only gives him a guarantee amounting to a probability that if he sows he shall reap. This probability is his working basis. But he has a positive assurance that if he does not sow he shall not reap. Now, if he lingers in doubt and does not sow, he must perish for the want of bread. This is the sense of Christ's words, "He that believeth not shall be condemned." He who lives a wicked, sinful life has the evidence of condemnation within himself, and he has conscious knowledge, growing out of his own experience, that his bad passions of sin are growing stronger, and that he is gradually sinking into a pit, in so far as he knows, of endless ruin.

But it may be, in justice, further stated that imperfect as are the Christian governments of earth, the man who lives up to the letter of their requirements is, to say the least, not far from the kingdom of God. It is a fact recognized that their laws and courts of law are based upon the sacred Scriptures. Now, as a rule, the man whose life is out of accord with civil law, which, as stated, is based upon the Word of God; that is, the man who is guilty of theft, murder, adultery, defrauding his neighbor, or any other violation of law, is dealt with by the courts and punished according to the laws of the government. Now, these courts do not stop to consider whether the prisoner believed or disbelieved God's law or the civil law, which is based on God's law;

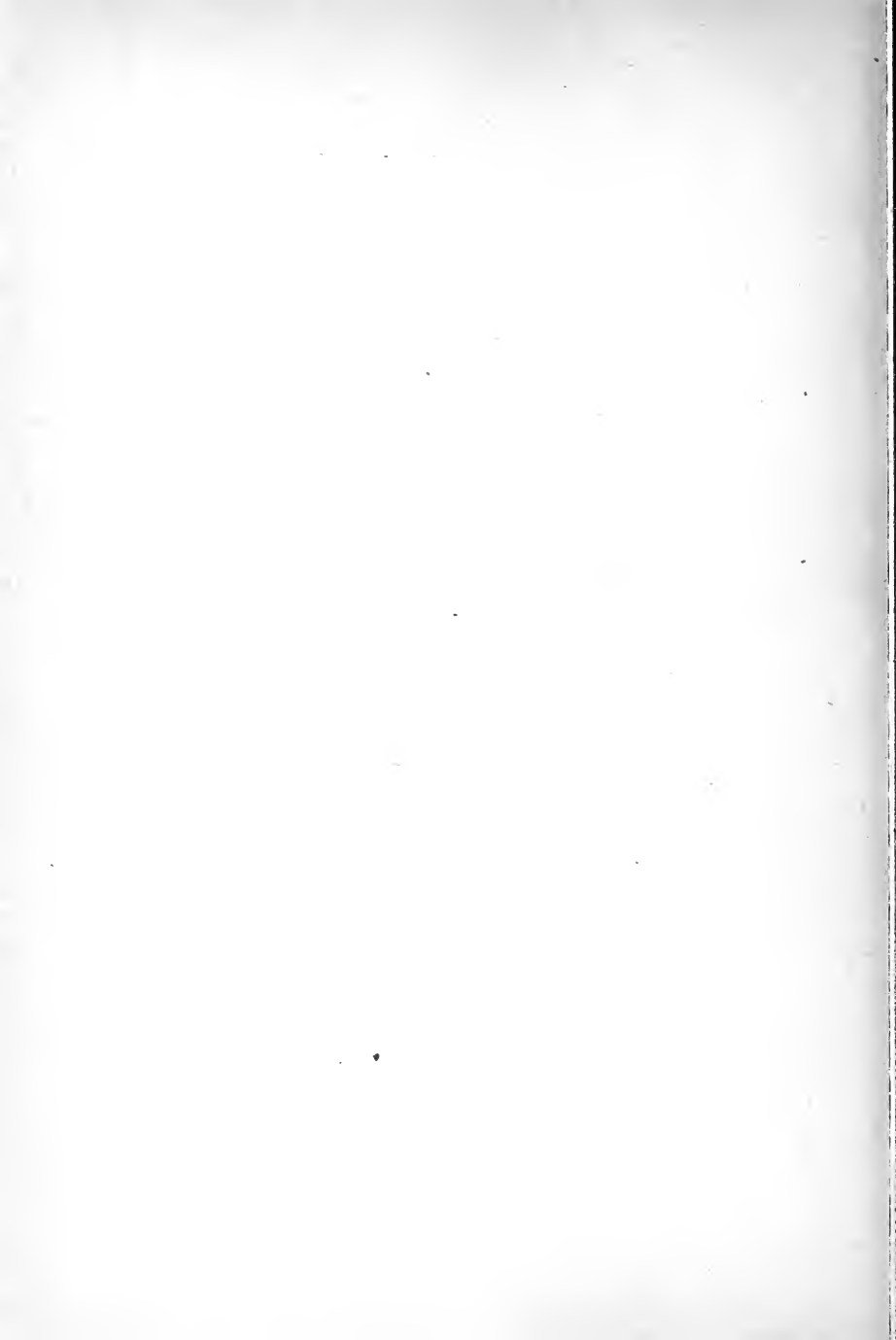
**Analogy
of the
Civil Law.**

whether he was a doubter or a believer, but they simply determine whether his life is, or is not such as every man's must be to stand acquitted before the law; that is, whether his life is such as the rights of man and the highest interests of society demand of every man, even if there were not a God in the universe, and condemn or justify him accordingly. These civil courts clearly recognize that doubts, honest as they may be, seldom, if ever, are the cause of a man's bad life or a justification of it. They adjudge him guilty on the ground that he had conscious knowledge, that his acts were wrong, and that he had the opportunity and power to have done otherwise had he chosen to do so. Respecting Christ and his credentials as ambassador from the court of heaven to earth, a distinguished judge says: "My own theory in the matter is, that it is not a question of logic any more than the axiom that 'things equal to the same thing are equal to each other' is the subject of mathematical demonstration. That Christ lives and is the Saviour of the world is as hard to prove by argument as it would be to prove that the friend whom you may introduce to another is really present and existent. He to whom your friend is introduced knows he exists and is present; his whole consciousness testifies to the fact. That is the highest degree of proof." He further adds: "It seems to me we are apt to exalt reason above its true place among the faculties of the mind. Reason and intuition, as it seems to me, are, in a sense, antagonistic faculties, one of which can be developed at the expense of the other. Of the two, intuition, to me, seems to be the higher faculty. For while reason, from the

same evidence, may lead two men in exactly opposite directions, intuition is either silent or will guide to the right unerringly."

Proofs and argument in the field of Christian evidences, it is true, have their place, and are of high importance, but the vital experience of saving faith is deeper and broader than argument, and the fact that the Christian has conscious knowledge that Christ Jesus saves him from his sins, and is saving the world, is the highest possible proof that he came from God and is accomplishing his divine commission.

**Vital
Experience
of Salvation
Is Above
Argument.**



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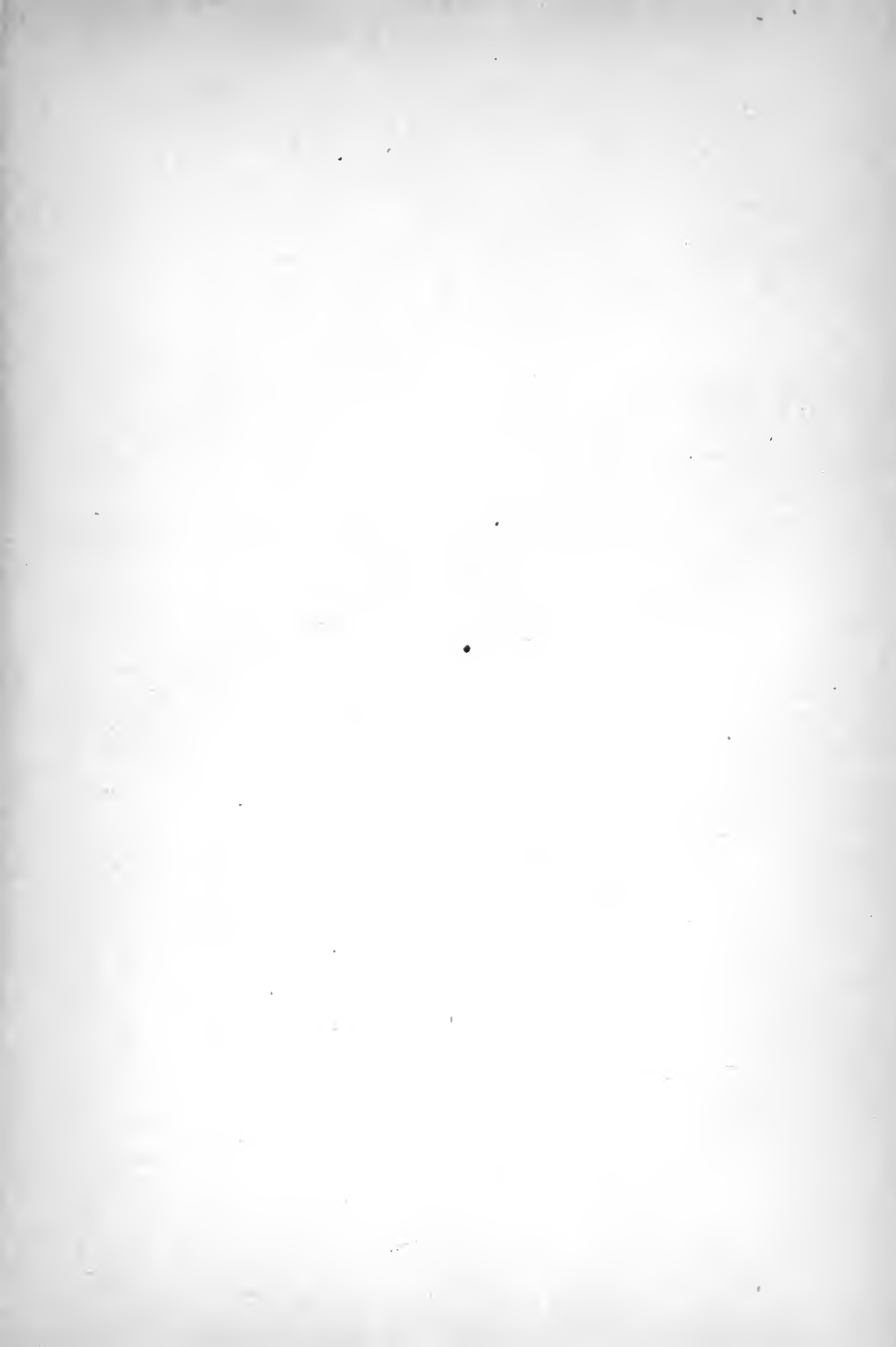
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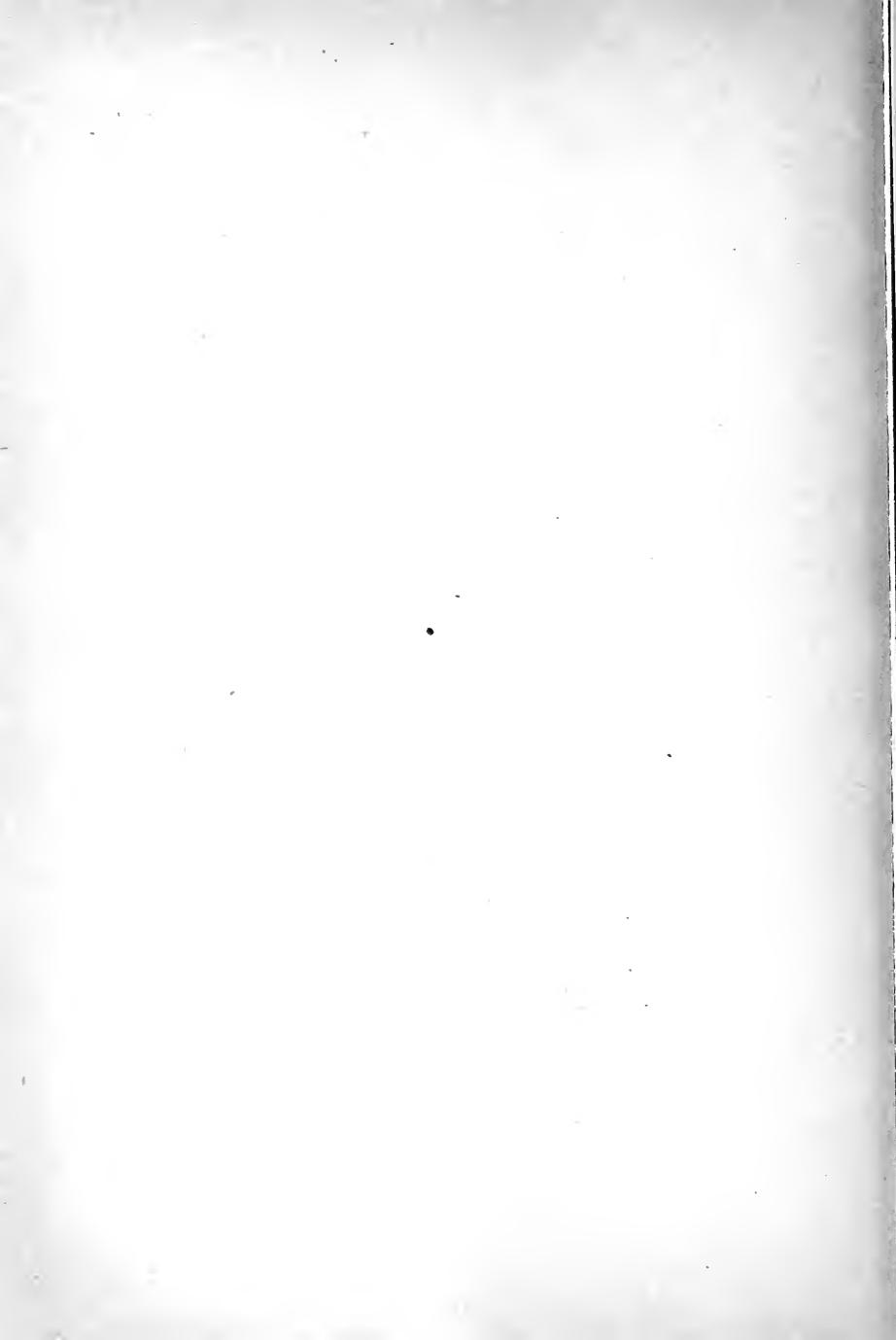
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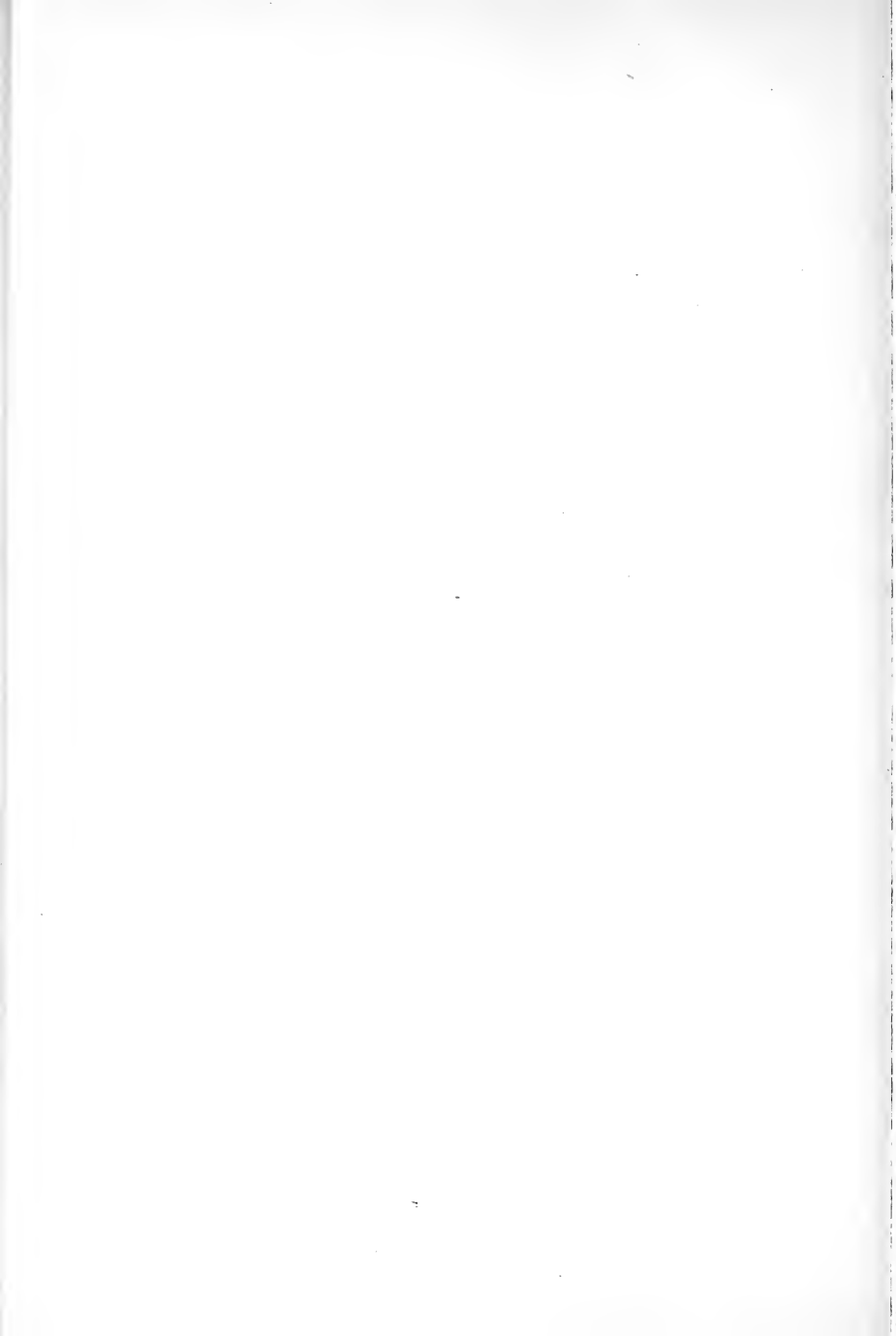
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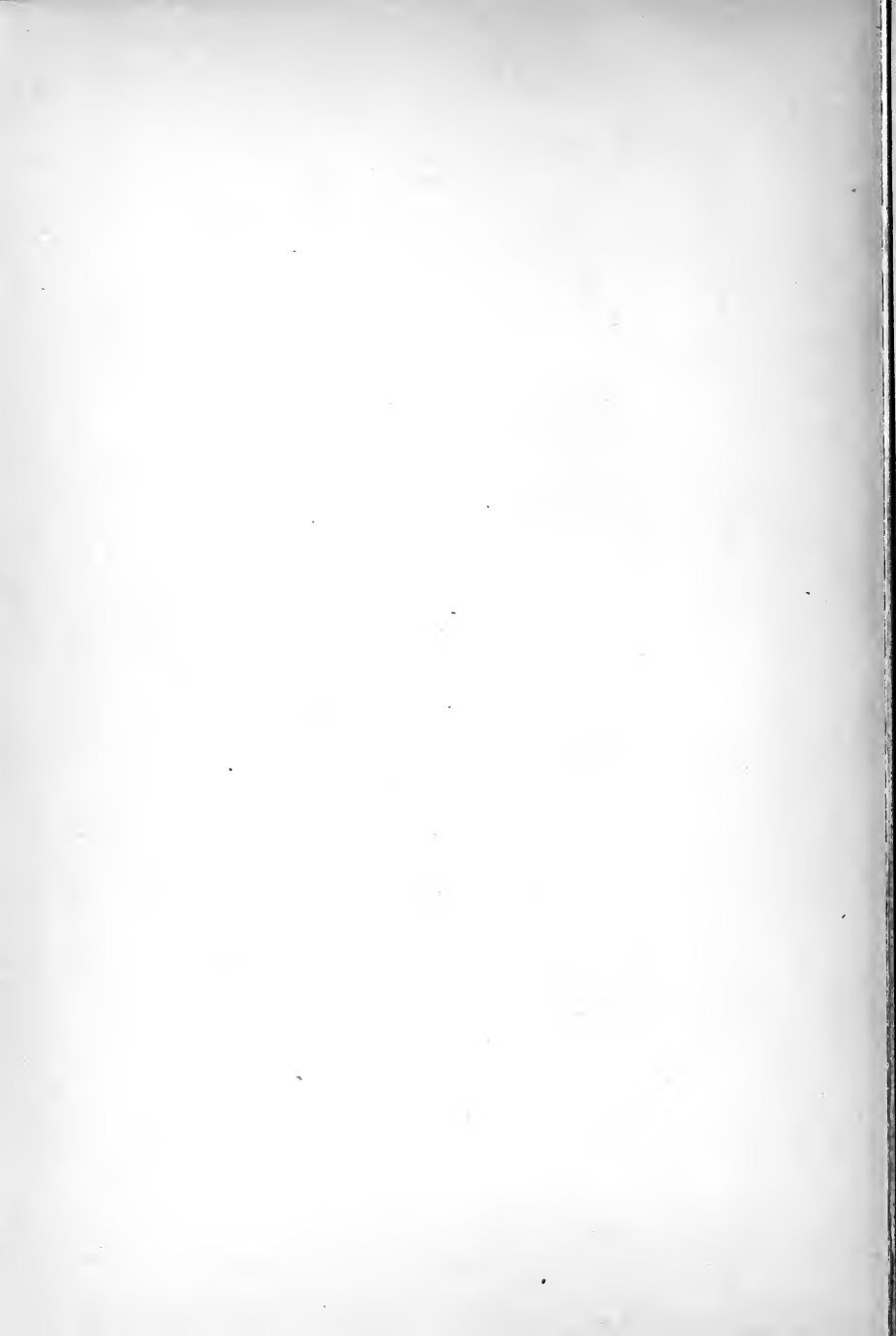
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